The COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLVII *October* 24, 1947 NUMBER 2

THE WEEK		29
APPETITE FOR FAILURE		30
COMMUNISM IN ITALY	*Max Ascoli*	32
SEUMAS MURPHY	*Vivian Mercier*	35
THE BRIGHTER SIDE	*Anne Fremantle*	37
THEORY OF PRAYER (Verse)	*Thomas Merton*	40
THE STAGE	*Kappo Phelan*	41
THE SCREEN	*Philip T. Hartung*	42
SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS	*Edward S. Skillin*	42
ON TUCKING ONE'S SHIRT IN	*John Cournos*	44
MORE BOOKS OF THE WEEK		46

A Treasury of Mexican Folkways—The Ring and the Cross—The Christian Churches of the East—Chatterton Square—The Moneyman—Madame Elisabeth of France—Ferdinand Lasalle: Romantic Revolutionary—A Multitude of Living Things—Russia: The Giant That Came Last.

THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in* 1924 *with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1947 in the U.S.A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U.S. and Canada $6 a year, Foreign $7. Single copies 15c

EDWARD S. SKILLIN, *Editor*

PHILIP BURNHAM, *Executive Editor*

C. G. PAULDING, *Managing Editor*

Associate Editors

John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Gregory Smith

Kappo Phelan, *Theater* Philip T. Hartung, *Cinema*

Corresponding Editor

Harry Lorin Binsse

Advertising Manager

John Brubaker

A Floor Under National Food Consumption

WHILE the current House and Senate agricultural committee hearings perforce have been focused on such immediate urgencies as shortages, runaway commodity prices and foreign commitments, it is heartening that more permanent plans were discussed as well. And this is more than a case of farm groups seeking assurances that there will be markets for their increased capacity once the present foreign shortages are past.

From the longer view it is, of course, deplorable that concentration on the production of a single crop has made so many farmers dependent upon the government for price support, commodity loans and actual purchases of their crops. Any program over the years to prove adequate must include greater diversification of production, building up the soil and intensification of the farmers' own cooperative organizations to secure adequate credit and the advantages of group buying and marketing (if not the educational, recreational, medical and social facilities required to make the American rural community an embodiment of the good life). But when this, and all that it implies, is stated, the farmer still depends upon cash crops for much of his livelihood.

One school, which was represented at the committee hearings by Ed O'Neal of the Farm Bureau Federation, would depend on scarcity economics to give the farmer an assured market at a decent, and better, price for what he wrests from the earth. Whatever may be the thought in various local branches of this major national farm organization, its chief Washington representative continues to speak up for old line crop quotas and acreage restrictions, combined with government parity supports, to keep prices up.

However, the plan which Secretary Anderson has announced carries on one New Deal idea, in that it would set a floor under the amount of farm commodities consumed domestically in prosperous years and bad. One of the principle means of accomplishing this would be to revive the food stamp plan giving low income families direct access to commodities which are in surplus. Another is to extend the national school lunch program materially. Mr. O'Neal flatly opposed this idea of linking agricultural surpluses with a food stamp plan for the nation's low income groups, except perhaps at some moment of desperation. On the other hand, Russell Smith, legislative representative of the National Farmers Union, backed the Anderson proposal to the hilt and favored an even more extensive resort to such distributive devices.

Here again the prospect of vast numbers of Americans dependent directly on the government for their subsistence is not a pleasing one. Yet food surpluses will at times coincide with periods of widespread unemployment. And even in the best of times there are vast numbers of our people who would benefit in every way from a diet, which is more nutritious. Also, the building of our school children's physiques is a long-term national investment. It is difficult to find any objection to this scheme, particularly if its administration is assigned to local rather than to federal authorities. And in any case it is greatly preferable to a system which depends so much on keeping production below the foreseeable cash demand regardless. Surely by now we must rely on some better means of meeting the hard exigencies of supply and demand than keeping basic foodstuffs scarce enough to maintain pressure on the supply at hand. The only humanly acceptable course is to work unrelentingly on building up the demand factor in this equation.

It may not be generally realized, but, despite the impetus given to American farm production during the war and the desperate foreign shortages in the ensuing interval, the United States is still a long way from its potential production peak.

From every angle restriction of production is the wrong approach. Even in "normal" times the food needs of the nation are not satisfactorily

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

met and there are regions in other lands where crops continually prove inadequate. The vagaries of wind and weather are never sufficiently predictable, and even when floods and drought are clearly in prospect there are limits to what American farmers can do about them. Bad crop years are inevitable from time to time; in good years enough must be set aside to provide for lean ones (the ever-normal granary). Finally, the situation has changed with regard to the industrial demand for farm products. What used to be a merely hopeful catch-phrase for taking care of unused crop surpluses now expresses a reality. The expending of so much of our mineral store during the war and the increasing importance of plastics have greatly expanded the demands of industry for root and fiber raw materials.

For coming up with a solidly constructive national plan for the first time in many months the Truman Administration deserves a hand. It makes so much sense that the Republicans will do well to adopt the most considerable part of it, too, and thus take it out of partisan politics.

Appetite for Failure

"I HOLD, as some have done before me, that the human mind degenerates in America, and that the superiority of the white race, such as it is, is only kept up by intercourse with Europe. (Peacock, Gryll Grange, 1860.)" Cyril Connolly leads off the American double number of his magazine, *Horizon,* with Thomas Love Peacock's above, straightforward judgment. If this geographic and racist dictum held, there would be no trouble or mystery about American civilization (although Europeans would be forced to some long explanations indeed). But Mr. Connolly is intelligent, good willed and enquiring, and the symposium he has assembled on the present state of the United States, while less decisive than Peacock's older one, leads a reader to less depressing and perhaps less futile speculation.

Horizon is an English little magazine, lively, interesting and the most widely read and respected intellectual review in the United Kingdom since before the war, since, say, the days of the now defunct *Criterion. Partisan Review* is the magazine most like it in America.

"Why, after midnight, do so many Americans fight or weep? . . . the American business male . . . carries within him a dustbowl of despair . . . 'extremely lonely, but then so is every American' . . . the American tragedy . . ."

All these unhappy phrases appear in the traveling English editor's introduction to *Horizon's* survey of America. The rest of the issue comes from this side of the ocean, eighteen contributions which all reinforce and specify the "tragedy" of America, which Connolly somewhat and modestly organizes by selection and introduction.

The overt limitation of the study to art and artists (the cover says, "Art on the American *Horizon,*" which might be a rather American advertising ellipsis) seems to be, practically, a convention of humility; actually the effect is of an over-all, brief diagnosis of what the observers —who are mostly talented and loyal participants —develop as the culture of the country: our civilization and lack thereof.

There is no way to retail on this page the description. Eighteen writers, selected for expertness in their various fields, have all full articles (or poems or stories) of their own in which to give the scene a very rich going-over in the *Horizon,* which is worth reading without digest. Isn't the observed and recorded unhappiness a sufficient summary of their finding (of course, they like and enjoy very much, too)? Mr. Connolly's writers, being writers, see the problem particularly clearly on the side of language. "But language is communication, and every problem in language becomes also a social problem. The social problem, here as elsewhere, is one of producers and consumers: Who will write this prose? For what audience? What will be communicated by it?" (William Barrett, "Notes on Being an American")

I believe much of the multiple criticism is embraced in Connolly's generous, and very flattering lament for *Time, Life* and *The New Yorker*:

> It is easy to make fun of these three papers, but in fact they are not funny. Although they have very large circulations indeed, they only just miss being completely honorable and serious journals, in fact 'highbrow.' . . . They work very hard, and deliver *almost* the best work of which they are capable. But the gap is never quite closed between the public and the high-brow writer, because the American organism is not quite healthy.

His conclusion seems to be that in too many works, American persons fail to do their best, and the best they know they can do. This is a terrifyingly simple lesson to take from so formidable a highbrow text as *Horizon,* but the editor himself appears to be driven somewhere near to it. Even his hope for America's future involves that simple judgment on the present. We are to be pushed into civilization, not, evidently, choosing it of our own accord: "As Europe becomes more helpless the Americans are compelled to become far-seeing and responsible, as Rome was forced by the long decline of Greece to produce an Augustus, a Vergil. *Our impotence liberates their potentialities.* Something important is about to happen, as if the wonderful *jeunesse* of America were suddenly to retain their idealism and vitality and courage and imagination into adult life, and become the wise and good who make use of them; the old dollar values are silently crumbling, and the self-criticism, experimental curiosity, sensibility and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

warmth . . . are on the way in."

There is the present failure to do the best possible. Such a capital failure renders almost useless and meaningless criticism of the best things that *are* done as being perhaps not very good. The failure to try to do our best work saddens nearly every one of these eighteen criticisms (and the others indicate why the few who seem to try their best frequently are oddities, intellectuals, academics, cranks, whose best can hardly turn out wonderful). The preemption of the cultural market by the commercial middlebrow is bemoaned truly, if somewhat vulgarly by most of the highbrow talent of *Horizon*: slick magazines, Hollywood, radio sponsors and the rest.

It's not only "literature and the fine arts" that fall. The man who makes a worse mousetrap than he knows how to is also a traitor to civilization. The failure runs below Joe Alsop's fairly superficial analysis of "American Foreign Policy." Congress is stylishly slandered, and the big people in Washington are shown doing worse than they want to do, and know how to do—worse and less honestly—kowtowing to the "delusion" of "a country and a Congress": delusions which are dissipated, presumably, by lying and demagogy.

The airiest and probably earthiest article in the magazine seems to me the one that tells most clearly and openly about this first bad thing of American civilization: that persons don't aim at their best performance. It is Herbert Marshall McLuhan's essay on "American Advertising." He demonstrates that "the multi-billion dollar, nation-wide educational programs of the ad-men (dwarfing the outlay on formal education) provide a world of symbols, witticisms, and behavior patterns which . . . certainly do comprise a common experience and a common language. . . . Moreover, by various means, the whole technique and hallucination of Hollywood has been assimilated to the ads *via* pictorial glamor, so that the two are inseparable. They constitute one world." The world includes, the McLuhan analysis tends to show, the whole industrial, marketing-distributing structure of our advanced economy, which, in turn, is the regulator of production.

He describes the marvels of American "market research" and of the "service" organizations which test and disclose the behavior and the varieties and intensities of appeals to the customer—conscious and, particularly, unconscious. "To exploit the irrational and, at all times, to avoid the pitfalls of rational 'sales resistance' aroused by the inept ad is the first law of advertising dynamics."

A typically rich and delicious assemblage of examples is quoted, approaching our well-labeled reflexes. Like " 'announcing the birth of a Petunia,' said an ad in which a man and a woman were bent over a flowerpot: 'It takes emotion to move merchandise. *Better Homes and Gardens* is perpetual emotion.' " And so on.

> It aims not only at providing more and more sensation, but at the exploitation of all emotional-sets and preferences as just so much raw material to be worked up by centralized control for purposes of super-profits . . . Meantime, these appetites for private power are inventing the means of possible political power for the future. And even these private activities are obviously political, indirectly . . . Perhaps, however, the relevant observation here is simply that appetite is essentially insatiable, and when it operates as the criterion of both action and enjoyment (that is, everywhere in the western world since the sixteenth century) it will infallibly discover congenial agencies (mechanical and political) of expression . . . Just how far these billionaire campaigns of systematic sophistry and hallucination contribute to worsening any given state of affairs would be hard to say. Because there is nothing in these richly efflorescent ads which has not been deeply wished by the population for a long time. They aren't so much phenomena of a Machiavellian tyranny as the poor man's orchids—both a compensation and a promise for beauty desired.

Again the public get what we want. *Horizon* grows very moral here in tracing failure of culture, the failure of creators and makers to produce the best they can, to a too eager and universal concentration on material appetite. And it echoes back to judgments scattered through the issue. (Not to the Santayana quotation, nor to Greenberg on painting, and probably not to Connolly's part.) Finally, McLuhan is optimistic:

> Now, moreover, that the luxuriant and prurient chaos of human passions is thrust forward and gyrated in this way for our daily contemplation, there is the increasing possibility of the recovery of rational detachment . . . To contemplate the products of our own appetites rather than to anathematize the people who are keen enough to exploit them—that is surely no program which must await the setting up of committees or social machinery. It is the only form of adult education which could be called realistic and is instantaneously practicable.

The *Horizon* American issue contains no reference to the work of the Church in America. The editor sought an essay on Christianity in the USA: "Many other writers were called, but few chose." There was no Catholic, evidently, whose willingness and ability and position and energy imposed an article in the symposium. There was no Catholic or any Christian activity in America which captured the attention of the actually articulate and accepted contributors who built up the picture with undoubted sincerity. The wilderness is well presented in their picture, quite adequately equipped for the sound of the voice, crying.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communism in Italy

Max Ascoli

THE MOST AMAZING thing about Italy is that it had not been discovered by the National Association of Manufacturers as its promised land. There have not been many confirmations lately of the old theories that the best government is the government which governs the least, that the most effective of all five-year plans is no plan and that the less the citizens are burdened with taxes and regulations, the better off the nation is.

Yet, this has been, until very recently, the state of affairs in the Italian Republic — a state of affairs that came into being from the beginning of the liberation of the country and that perhaps ended only at the beginning of June, when a Right-Center government came into power. Paradoxically enough, this new government that tries to govern the most it can, is led by orthodox believers in laissez-faire, while to the Communist members of the previous coalition governments goes the greatest credit for having kept the citizens remarkably free from government interference.

Since the liberation began, the country, with or without governmental direction, has made extraordinary progress towards its reconstruction. But the end of the permanently deadlocked coalition governments has solemnly warned the Italians that in a few months they will have to take some time off from their hard work and turn their thoughts to politics. The General Elections are supposed to be next spring—a date that Italian politicians are waiting for in fear and trembling. It will be an event of large national and international significance, for the way Italy goes at that time will probably affect the turn that Western Europe is going to take.

★

The politically minded Italians are acutely aware of the chain reactions that their political decision will start. This awareness marks Italian politics with a queer quality of self-consciousness. It is as if each of the main political parties were bent on crushing its opponent and, at the same time, somewhat afraid of over-winning. Strange things happen. On the left, there are intermittent "harmony" gatherings among politicians who entertain for each other the most heartfelt well-publicized hatred and contempt. Across the boundary lines between right and left, Giannini, the *Qualunquista* and Togliatti, the Communist, have been engaged in public discussions marked by overtones of reciprocal consideration and esteem. Occasionally, the politicians exchange among each other certificates of respectability. Giannini himself is one of the favorite recipients, particularly since the out-and-out fascists seceded from his party.

Fear is perhaps the simple word which best describes this ever-present, all-pervading state of mind of the politically minded Italians—a state of mind that one can find all over the continent of Europe. It is fear that the political conflicts may turn into civil war, and fear that the civil war of a nation may become the new world war; it is fear of a coming struggle between the two major powers of the world. Should this struggle reach the military stage, the Italians and other Europeans know that, irrespective of the outcome, they are going to be the victims. What war means, they know, and about the new weapons of the next war, they have heard. They do not want to be the goats of a new Bikini.

Even Nenni, the pro-communist Socialist leader, even Togliatti, the anti-American Communist leader, from time to time grudgingly have had to admit what every sensible person in the country knows: that only American assistance can speed up the economic rehabilitation of Italy. Yet, on the other hand, even people who are uncompromisingly anti-communist, have their hope and gratitude toward America somewhat marred by the fear that American assistance may mean a step forward on the road to war. The ringing declarations of the Truman Doctrine filled many an Italian anti-communist with dismay. The Harvard speech of Secretary Marshall made people breathe more freely, but the same people shuddered when Mr. Molotov slammed the door upon leaving the Paris Conference.

The coalition cabinets, where the three major political parties (the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and the Communists), shared the responsibility of government, were the device that the politicians needed to keep the political tension of the nation high and, at the same time, muffled. This rather peculiar combination of ruthlessness and inter-party amenities could find its sheltered organs in the cabinet meetings or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inside the various ministries. There the political antagonists could spy on each other, each one trying to do his best in using his share of patronage to the greatest benefit of his own party.

In Italy, as everywhere in Europe, political parties are fairly expensive affairs. They require in every community full-time party workers, who need typewriters and telephones and automobiles and gas and tires to run around. Patronage is essential to keep the political machines oiled, and the fat ministries having to do with the nation's economy were objects to keep competition among the leaders of the three major parties during the ever-recurring governmental crises. Politics in Italy, as in most of continental Europe these days, has a hard, rough-and-tumble, Mississippi character.

Among the three major parties the communists were and still are by far the best equipped. Their machine is the largest, the most efficiently run and therefore the most expensive. While waiting for an order from Moscow, or for a decision from the Italian electorate, the best government, as far as the communists were concerned, was the one that governed the least. But the primary condition was that they had to be in it. "Either loyally in the government, or rioting in the streets against the government," was Togliatti's slogan.

Haltingly, and yet undeviatingly, with the insecure steps of those who have to tread on mined ground, the Christian Democrats for long months strove to break the yoke of the coalition governments and assume the main responsibility of power. They attained their goal last June, helped by powerful pressure from within, particularly from the industrialists, and by the world-wide political atmosphere created by the Truman Doctrine. They dared to form a government from which the communists and their socialist allies were excluded. Many Christian Democrats, many anti-communist leaders are still stunned by their own daring.

★

To the communists, the blow has been an extremely hard one—much harder than they like to admit. Already, in the previous government crisis in February of this year, they were forced to retreat from some of their most cherished governmental positions, the Ministries of Post-War Assistance and the Treasury. A party of revolution, unwilling or unready to make the revolution, had to accept this trimming of its power. But the total exclusion from the government meant for them the loss of a crucial battle.

Since the formation of the first anti-fascist government, they have had one supreme aim: To prevent a repetition of fascism at all costs. Once before, at the end of the first World War, communism had become the most important political factor in the country and then, in the course of a very few months, it was thoroughly crushed. The anti-fascist record of the Italian communist leaders has been beyond reproach. They suffered cruelly under fascism, some of them died in jail, some fought in Spain, others had a chance to test their mettle in the hard grind of Italian prisons, or in the struggle for power of Moscow's Comintern. Possibly half of the resistance movement, after Mussolini's fall in July, 1943, was made up of communist fighters. Now, they want to have an unqualified victory, on the same ground where they were defeated twenty-five years ago.

Since the beginning of the liberation, Italian communists have been hard at work trying to enlist under their banner as many as possible of those economic and social groups that, twenty-five years ago, made for fascism or were easy prey to it. So communism tries to appeal to the veterans of Mussolini's wars, to the harassed and embittered returning war prisoners. This time, the communists think, the ranks of the jobless ex-servicemen will not be a breeding ground for young right-wing desperadoes. The tenant farmer and the small or medium-sized land-owners, unwilling to be proletarized, were the backbone of the fascist movement twenty-five years ago. This time, Italian communism does not take any chances. It appeals to the present or prospective land-owners, it promises them the full enjoyment of their property, it manages to defend them against too strict government regulations.

The small man, the white-collar worker, the petty bourgeois crowded into the inflated government bureaucracy, twenty-five years ago were easy game for fascism. Now they are game for communism, as communist leaders are tireless in sponsoring the civil servants' demands for higher salaries, job security and seniority rights.

The anti-Catholic antics of Italian communism at the end of World War I were greatly resented by the religious masses. This time, Togliatti has hastened to endorse Mussolini's Concordat with the Vatican and to underwrite the principle that Italy is a Catholic state. Particularly in the agricultural south, Christ is piously referred to as "the first communist."

Of course, capitalism too, particularly finance capitalism, has something to do with the birth and the growth of fascism. Twenty-five years after that bitter lesson, Italian communism cultivates the friendly open-mindedness of men who are high in industrial and financial circles.

Today, the Italian Communist Party, it is said, has more than two million and a half members—the largest communist party in continental Europe outside of Soviet Russia and, in proportion to the population, the largest communist party in the world. It seems to be driving fast toward

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that five million goal that was the high-water mark of the Fascist Party. It has nearly reached its main objective: it has copied the social composition of fascism so diligently that most of the forces that once combined to form fascism, now are well within the communist ranks. By being all things to all men, it has become a political cross-section of the nation—which is quite different from "the fighting vanguard of the working classes."

The leadership of the party, of course, is in the capable hands of men who are not likely to forget the ultimate aim of international communism. But they have over-played their democratic game to such an extent that their over-extended party is in danger of actually becoming what it pretends to be: pro-middle-class, pro-private property, pro-religion and, whenever it can, patriotic. The panther has grown to pachydermous proportions. Has it still the same leap and the same bite?

★

These doubts and queries must have burdened the minds of Italian politicians and, above all, of the Christian Democratic leaders at the time when, following the example of Belgium and France, the experiment of a cabinet without communist participation was started. It was a hazardous venture. There was talk of civil war, of general strike, of workers' revolutionary uprisings, of Left-wing partisans entrenching themselves in the northern mountains. But nothing happened. The Communist Party kept retreating.

Prevented from ruling the country, or sharing its rule, and obviously unwilling to try revolution, the Italian communist leaders went on agitating against the government. But it is hard for them to agitate against a government unless they are part of it. Yet, grudgingly and unwillingly, the frustrated rulers and frustrated rebels have to play the rôle of "loyal" opposition. To avoid being cornered a second time, as they were twenty-five years ago, they try with renewed fury to enlist new followers and spread in all directions. But the more they spread, the greater is their risk. They are in danger of losing the impetus, the hard revolutionary core of their program, if they become just a parliamentary opposition party. And they are in danger of losing their mass membership if they try revolution.

Moreover, politics in Italy is, of necessity, run on a day-by-day, hand-to-mouth basis. To be respected a party must be in condition to offer the ready cash of protection, patronage and jobs. These are inflationary times: The coin of today is better than a promissory note of tomorrow. The political electioneering work can be done best from the government, by holding government positions—and the communists know this well. A party, no matter how large, that is out of the government, is on a dangerous downhill slide that might bring it out of politics—and bigness can only accelerate the sliding and tumbling process.

Recently, the communist leadership has been trying to halt the retreat by launching scattered counter-offensive actions. Enough strikes and agitations were staged to give the Christian Democratic government the foretaste of something much worse ahead. It was all, throughout, sheer war of nerves, not civil war or a sample of civil war—in fact, a painfully legalistic war of nerves, aimed at overthrowing the government after a good old-fashioned parliamentary debate.

Had they succeeded in overthrowing the government, the communist leaders would never have tried to take power in their own hands. They know only too well that this would mean civil war, and that an Italian civil war has no chance of remaining, even for twenty-four hours, a private Italian affair. As long as Russia doesn't want war, the aim of the Italian communists is not the conquest of power, but the return to the abandoned tradition of the coalition governments. Their purpose is not to turn the Christian Democrats out of office and not even to deprive them of the premiership, but rather to force them to a shotgun remarriage.

The communist retreat is going on, and the chances are that it will be made even more hazardous by the new strategy that the Belgrade Comintern has just announced. Perhaps the Italian leadership will be radically changed and certainly the huge, retreating army will have to be re-deployed. Perhaps the greatest danger to Italian democracy today is that the communist retreat may turn into a rout. This is what happened twenty-five years ago: Mussolini sprang his attack after the communists had over-reached themselves by occupying the factories. Many avowed, or unavowed, Right-wing leaders all over the country would welcome the prospect of a new communist rout. There are many people who are communists by name only, within the communist ranks, who may outrun the so far skilfully managed retreat. And there are in the Communist Party excellent democratic elements that went into communism because it was driving so hard to gain the support of those who believed in democracy.

Perhaps the party has grown too fast—too fast for its own good and for the good of Italian democracy. And this situation is not peculiar to Italy alone. Perhaps these huge communist parties, so clever in mimicking democracy, are a danger to democracy, not because of their revolutionary potentialities, but because with their weakness, they induce into temptation the same opponents that they have scared. They don't quite

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know how to be real democratic parties—they always overdo it.

★

Or perhaps in Italy the communists have fallen into the same mistake as fascism: They have assumed that a far larger proportion of Italians than it is actually possible could develop active political partisanship.

Amidst all the political frenzy, amidst the endemic fears of the politically-minded, the great bulk of the nation work. With the government, or without the government, this work has been going on at such a pace that hardly two years after the end of the war the country is already unrecognizable.

It is also because they are still not much inclined to worry about politics that the Italians work so hard. They are like people whose house has been horribly shattered and the roof blown off and who do not overindulge in sulking and figuring out what may come next, revolution, economic upheaval or atomic bomb. For, they seem to think, if the house has no roof, then something like a roof must be patched up, with whatever material may be available, picked up from the ruins, or bought or stolen.

Perhaps the ingrained longing for anarchy of the Italians has found its satisfaction in the relaxation from governmental rules that characterized the various cabinets since the liberation. With little annoyance coming from the law, everybody in order to scrape a living plunged into his own trade, or any available trade, legal or illegal. Everybody, including the politicians, who plunged with long-restrained fury into their for so long forbidden trade. Yet in Italy, now more than ever, politics is still largely the self-contained business of the politically-minded. The politicians know it and this perhaps is another reason for that muffled, self-conscious quality that Italian politics has.

Only the communist politicians, who neither share the rule of the government nor riot in the streets, seem now to forget this characteristic of the Italian political game. Their warnings of incoming fascist reaction become increasingly loud and shrieking. Sometimes it seems to be the communists' destiny to bring about with their fears the very forces that they are afraid of. It is just an aspect of the present-day European or perhaps world tragedy of fears. If fear of communism were enough to give it power, communism would rule all over Europe. The same can be said about the communist fear of fascism.

But work is the best antidote for fear and the effort is now being made to create an order in Europe that may keep the European people at work. There is nothing more important, as far as Italy and the European countries are concerned. Togliatti's party certainly represents in more than one way a danger to Italian democracy, and Tito at the northeastern border perhaps represents an even greater danger. Yet, the two T's combined are not as ominous a threat as that hovering over the sign of another T —Representative Taber. If America doesn't see that the nations of western Europe are still good risks, if there is no adequate understanding here of what work means to the people of Europe, then all the Togliattis and the Titos are going to have an easy time. But, if the peoples of Europe are given a chance, all the fears of communism, or of fascism, or of war, may prove to have been the last nightmare of nations slowly working their way into self-respect and sanity.

Seamus Murphy

VIVIAN MERCIER

MY BRIEF reference to the Irish sculptor Séamus Murphy in "The Arts In Ireland" (COMMONWEAL, June 6, 1947) aroused such interest that I have spent the intervening months goading him to tell the American public more about himself. His own modesty, rather than any lack of verbal skill, has made him delegate the job to me, for he is already the author of a book, "Stone Mad," which is soon to be published on the other side. He has sent me some biographical data and a number of photographs of his work. The latter, if I can find a periodical to publish them, will tell more about the art of Séamus Murphy than a million words of mine.

I must have met Séamus first in Dublin, through Brid Lynch, most lovely and lovable of the younger Abbey Theatre actresses, but my first vivid memory of him is in his Cork "stone-yard." This is a backyard behind a public house, where my wife and I found him chipping away at a huge vertical block of limestone in an open shed. A short, stocky man in rough tweeds and a white dust-coat, he looked fit material for one of his own portrait busts. His big head, with its brown, almost reddish hair swept back from a broad, high forehead, might appear at a distance that of the conventional *virtuoso*. But the nose and mouth boisterously reject all conventionality, especially the nose. Long, but unexpectedly truncated, it looks as if it had been blunted by the same imperious thumb which with a single twist moulded each of the extravagantly upswept nostrils. The mouth beneath might sometimes indulge in savage mockery if the nose were not there to turn all its bitternesses into humorous gaiety. The whole face has a roughness of texture which would delight anyone with a feeling for the grain of wood or stone. Séamus's talk is like his appearance—rough to the touch, but finely and firmly modeled. He "puts a skin on" everything he says, and countless malicious details will go to the building up of some big, shapely, circumstantial, utterly ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

travagant tale in the Cork manner. (James Joyce's father, whom his son regarded as a better story-teller than himself, came from Cork.) All Cork stories are designed to show the great ones of the earth as utterly corrupt and deceitful, while at the same time conveying that the said great ones are not clever enough to hoodwink the *raconteur*. The most outrageous and Rabelaisian of these preposterous villains are, of course, the wealthy and powerful of Cork City itself, so that one wonders why this small, beautiful provincial city, with its innumerable convents and churches, has not long ago suffered the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Murphy recently designed and embellished a large and handsome church which was built at the expense of a well known Cork businessman. The charitable people of Cork promptly equated the size of the church with that of the burden of sin on the donor's conscience.

Séamus led us from the shapeless block of limestone —which in time became his masterpiece, "Virgin of the Twilight"—to his "studio." This turned out to be a former garage with a glass panelled door. The original rough stone walls are now lined with shelves bearing the plaster effigies of many famous Irishmen of today, whose portraits Séamus has done in bronze. Dr. Douglas Hyde, first President of Eire, is there, and Eamon de Valera, and the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev. Dr. McQuaid, along with many others not quite so famous. Séamus is not at his best in portraiture, probably because clay is too facile a medium for someone brought up to work in stone.

After we had looked at the busts, statuettes, and photographs of major work in his studio, Séamus led us in through the back door of the public house to have some beer. In the "snug" he told us that the handy location of his stoneyard was rather a mixed blessing. Stone-cutting is thirsty work, and all masons like to wash the stone dust out of their throats with frequent beers, but beer is a poor substitute for food. When the creative passion had hold of Séamus, he used not to take enough time out to go home for a meal, but would work through all the hours of the daylight with no nourishment except an occasional bottle of beer or pint of stout. As a result, he contracted as many stomach ulcers as an advertising man, and has suffered with them periodically ever since. In 1944 he married Maigread, daughter of Joseph Higgins, another Cork sculptor, and she tries to make him take better care of himself. They have one daughter, Bébhinn, two years old.

★

Séamus became a sculptor the hard way—the old way. He served his time as an apprentice to a monumental stone mason, but how he came to do so is quite a story in itself. He was born in Mallow, Co. Cork, in 1907, the son of a railroad engineer (in Ireland we would call him a "railway engine driver"). His family came to Cork City when he was still very young, and he attended grade school there, St. Patrick's National School. Daniel Corkery, one of Ireland's leading writers and now a professor at University College, Cork, was then still a teacher at St. Patrick's. He recognized Séamus's artistic talent as he had recognized the writing talent of Frank O'Connor and Seán O'Faoláin, and advised him to attend art classes. Séamus went to night classes at the Cork Municipal School of Art when he was fourteen, and at fifteen was selected for apprenticeship. During his seven years of tutelage he had experience of every kind of stone carving—figure work, carving *in situ* on public buildings, work on tombstones, etc. He continued to attend art school, and first exhibited work at the Royal Hibernian Academy's annual exhibition in Dublin in 1931. In 1932 he was awarded the Gibson Bequest Travelling Scholarship and went to study in Paris. He exhibited in the Salon in 1933. In 1934 he returned home, and set up his own stoneyard. His first commission was to make a statue of Saint Finbar, the patron saint of Cork, for University College, Cork.

★

In this more-than-life-size piece of sculpture in native limestone, his favorite medium, he was tackling for the first time a problem which has baffled many Irish sculptors before him and after him. How can one create an unmistakably Irish school of Christian sculpture when there are almost no relevant Irish models? Free-standing sculpture seems to have been unknown in the great days of Irish Christian art. Indeed, nothing approaching naturalistic sculpture of the human figure was thought of in Ireland until the introduction of Romanesque from Europe in the 11th century or thereabouts. By then, to quote Françoise Henry's definitive book, "Irish Art in the Early Christian Period," Irish art "no longer had an irreducible individuality and became just a local version of styles which were spreading over the whole of Western Europe."

The only truly Irish figure sculpture is that on the great crosses, where the human figures are little more than decorative symbols, with no pretence to life-like form or proportion. No Western artist can now escape the dictation of the Ancient Greeks as to what is fitting in sculpture, particularly free-standing sculpture. Hence Murphy's Saint Finbar became a Romanesque compromise, life-like in its proportions, but modeled to be seen only from the front, and completely stiff and stylized as to hair and draperies.

Two later religious works of Murphy's, a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Madonna and Child, and "After Mass," both limestone statuettes between three and four feet high, show the same two dimensional tendencies. "After Mass" is a peasant woman, wearing one of the heavy cloaks so popular in Cork and Kerry, her hands crossed on her breast in the attitude of many carvings on Romanesque tombs. The Child in the arms of the standing Madonna faces the beholder almost as squarely as She does. Again the drapery in both statuettes is rigid and symmetrical. Irish limestone of course encourages this rigidity, since it is impossible to carve unsupported arms in it, and "undercutting" is equally impossible.

★

Murphy could have avoided the problem by using a more conventional Italianate style, as he did in his "Mother of Sorrows," now at Waterford, in deference to wishes of those who commissioned the statue. But in his eight foot limestone "Virgin of the Twilight" he solved the technical problem and the stylistic problem simultaneously. This sculpture gives an impression that is entirely three dimensional, though the material imposes the same limitations as ever. The Child is a tenderly modeled naked figure, seated sideways in His Mother's arms and contrasting sharply with the severe folds of her draperies, which have the rigidity of armor. I hesitate to use the word "rigidity" again, because there is no trace this time of stiffness or awkwardness about the composition as a whole. Perhaps it is the color of the stone which prompts the comparison to armor, for the entire statue is polished to a gleaming jet black. One of the reasons why Murphy favors Irish limestone is its capacity to take on with polishing this quality of black marble. The polishing of "Virgin of the Twilight" took three months.

I have said nothing yet of the Virgin's face, which becomes the climax of a great drama as one's eye travels upwards along the compelling lines of the huge composition, excitement mounting every moment. The heavy lidded, heavy lipped, almost masculine face, with its long Byzantine nose, is not quite like anything that one has seen in sculpture before, though it bears some resemblance to certain Byzantine representations of Christ. Its most striking quality is its serenity, something very rarely present in modern religious art. Most modern artists, showing little feeling for either ritual or theology, seem impelled to write into the faces of Virgin and Christ all the torments and doubts of our contemporary world.

This unusual serenity is present in all Séamus Murphy's religious sculpture that I have seen—in the bronze head "Prayer" and the Portland stone "Head of Virgin," as well as in the compositions already mentioned. Nowhere else, however, is it combined with the strength which is so unmistakable in "Virgin of the Twilight."

Murphy's masterpiece was exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy show in 1943, and won him election to the rank of Associate of the Academy (A.R.H.A.). The statue, however, still stands in his studio, and he has had no offers for it. It is hardly surprising, then, especially as he has since taken on family responsibilities, that he has not embarked on any more such ambitious projects without a commission. Even if he could afford the costly stone, he has not the precious time to spare. Much of the last four years was taken up with his maiden architectural enterprise, the Church of the Annunciation at Blackpool, Cork, for which he executed statues, panels, etc., in Portland stone, besides designing the church itself, and designing all fittings—doors, gates, altars, pulpit, fonts, lamps, etc.—whose making he also supervised.

Latterly, to pay off hospital bills, he has been doing nothing but lettering on tombstones and memorials, ten hours a day. But even this forced labor he can turn to good account. He is now absorbed by the problem of establishing a Gaelic alphabet more suitable for carved inscriptions than the one at present in use.

I don't for a moment believe that I have even halfway done justice to Séamus, either as a man or as a sculptor, in this short article. Yet I hesitate to write more, because I can view neither the man nor his work dispassionately. They are inseparable from each other in my mind, and the man is my friend. That last phrase sounds like a boast, and perhaps it is.

The Brighter Side*

ANNE FREMANTLE

THE ERA of virtuous gloom . . . austerity . . . crisis . . . economic blizzard . . . work or want . . . tighten our belts . . . export or bust . . . Such are but a few samples of the grim or gloomy slogans which have blared and glared at the British, on the British, for, to, and about the ears of the British, from hoarding and pulpit, from newspaper and parliament, from radio and rostrum, throughout the long, sunlit days of the loveliest summer in a quarter century. Meantime, the harvesters have put away their gallons of cider or beer, the London barrows have been laden with muscat grapes at 25 cents a pound, tomatoes have ripened in the bomb craters of the East End slums, and melons and 'pines' have been gobbled by miners' wives, in most cases for the first time in their history.

* Another fragment from a travel diary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Almost all the articulate in England today are either grousing or getting out. But the vast masses, those dumb millions apostrophized as "free once in four years," have proved, in 22 by-elections, that their choice of two years ago is their true, their whole, and nothing but their true choice. The Labor Government has not lost a single by-election in two years. This is a fact as staggering as the election turnover itself. And this record has been made in the teeth of a press almost unanimously, venomously hostile to Labor. Only the still, small and squeaky voice of the *Daily Herald* supports socialism today. Such old-timer Left organs as the *News-Chronicle,* the *New Statesman,* and the once Liberal *Economist,* are all whiners now.

Having spent the better part of my stay in England amongst the country gentry, who get daily bluer, both from cold and from conviction, as the Socialist juggernaut rolls over their last gardener, their last drop of gas, and their last pink coat, I decided I must, before returning to a USA *en pleine réaction,* hear the Labor case stated from within. I had, indeed, on arrival, been given dinner at the House by a posse of my old Oxford contemporaries, now, almost to a man, in the Government. But their appalling smugness, their complete lack of humility had made me long to cry, as Cromwell had once in that same place "by the bowels of Christ I beseech you to consider that perhaps you may be mistaken." I wasn't seeking a paean of self-satisfied chortles, nor even a pleased purr, but a serious discussion of the situation.

So I called Elizabeth Pakenham. She is, I think, the most brilliant and the most successful of my contemporaries. Niece of Austen and Neville Chamberlain, she had been a scholar at Oxford, and had taken an excellent degree in "Greats." Running several times as Labor candidate, she had been for years a night school and Workers Educational Association lecturer. Married to Frank Pakenham, heir to an Irish earldom, she has seven children and is imminently expecting her eighth. She has travelled from Unitarianism to Catholicism, whilst remaining fervently Labor. Frank Pakenham, once a Conservative Party candidate and Central Office official, an erstwhile 'don' at Christ Church, Oxford, is now Labor Minister in charge of Germany, and a Labor peer. And he, too, "from C. of E. has pope'd." We met, and after seeing the eldest Pakenham girl, Antonia, off to her convent at Ascot, went into the tea-room at Waterloo. Here, for 10 cents, we had tea with milk and sugar and a huge bun each, without ceding a B. U. (Bread ration unit).

Elizabeth began by admitting, fervently, how the elimination of "basic" (the basic petrol allowance of 6 gallons a month) galled her. "We live on the far side of Hampstead," she sighed, "and there are so many hills. Bicycling when one is seven months gone is no joke." The vast masses, she asserted, "are infinitely better off now than at any time between the two wars—and they know it. It's the middle classes, and above all, the white collar workers, who are hard hit. And, most of all, the old, the retired."

"The upper classes seem pretty put out," I said. "They give me the impression of White Russians who haven't left Russia. They live in a sort of Chekhovian absurdity, a kind of make believe that does not deceive anyone, let alone themselves."

"I think the really great families are perfectly all right," Elizabeth replied. "They don't give a damn. They've weathered far worse storms. They just retire to their country estates, make over what they can to the National Trust, and cabbage till the tide turns."

" 'O passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem' " (O you who have suffered more greatly, a God will give end also to these things. Vergil.) I quoted, and Elizabeth said "Exactly. It's the intelligentsia who are really suffering. The intelligent professional class. The people I come from, the professor, surgeon, etc. They have always been so civilized, spent their money so wisely: on visits to the Acropolis when young, to Assisi when old; on good music, good wines, good reproductions. They voted Labor, many of them; some—as you and I know—lost sons in the Spanish Civil War. They find it hard to understand for what they are being punished. And now they're struck down, and the proletariat is dragged up into their places."

"Is it?" I asked, "Gerry Hopkins, with whom I dined last night, says that the Labor Party has *created* a proletariat, a thing England has never had before. Hitherto, there have only been endless gradations of middle class."

"Only the Commies call themselves working class," Elizabeth said, "but it is the people now who all enjoy the comforts and amenities—such as they are—that only the wealthier enjoyed before. For example, my ex-nannie married a country baker's son. My children often go and stay with them, in Sussex. My Beryl is at least as well-dressed as I, and her children are better turned out than mine. And mine get better food staying with Beryl than they do at home."

"Yes," I agreed, "I asked my mother-in-law if I could give my small Hugh's outgrown clothes to her chauffeur's wife, and she was horrified. 'Good gracious, no,' she exclaimed, 'her babies are far better dressed than yours—or than mine were, for that matter. I wouldn't *dare* offer her old clothes, not even for romping in the garden. Give me your cast-offs for the Germans.' "

"Holidays with pay have made a tremendous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

difference." Elizabeth went on. "Everyone can get to the seaside once a year now, and sand, buckets and spades are part of every English child's make-up; and this year until these new restrictions came in, lots of the working classes went abroad."

"I met a plumber and an electrician holiday making in an Italian train," I said, "and one of the things I particularly noticed is that everyone now talks BBC English, or tries to. And it's no longer 'queer' to be highbrow. My plumber was reading a Penguin Sir James Jeans, and his friend was reading Aldous Huxley's 'Perennial Philosophy.' What about the food situation? Personally, I have eaten marvelously, but people who live on their rations must find themselves pretty hungry?"

"There are workers canteens in most factories, and there are British restaurants in most cities," Elizabeth began, but I interrupted:

"In most places the British restaurants seem to have closed down, and lots of works have given up their canteen. It's all right for the rich, but I don't see how the housewife manages who has to put up sandwiches for her man."

"School meals are a great help," Elizabeth said, but I objected again:

"My sister-in-law in Scotland says she can't afford the school meals—they come to $3 a week per child (1/6 a day).

"In London they cost 5d (8 cents) a day," Elizabeth replied. "It's true they vary too much. But every school child gets free milk, and, on the whole, especially in the villages, the number of British Restaurants has increased. And the ordinary cheap restaurants, ABC's and Lyons, etc., have come back and are doing a very good job. The ceiling of 2/3 (50 cents) and $1 for the Ritzy places, is excellent."

"Except that it means a cup of coffee costs $3." I replied, "I never had a meal out in London that cost less than a pound ($4), but I'll grant you the food is much better cooked, and a good deal less nasty."

"The compulsory recruiting of women in the war has a lot to do with that," Elizabeth said, "All the miserable little ATS and WAAFS and WRENS had to learn to prepare food."

"What about the queueing?" I asked. "Has it become a national mania, a kind of ersatz for work, for recreation, for existence?"

"A good deal of it *is* psychological," Elizabeth agreed. "The fish queues, for example, are entirely unnecessary. There is plenty of fish to go round And it seems much more of a hardship today, than it did in the war, because everyone thought it would end. But it's also largely due to the shortage of manpower in the distributive trades."

"What is the man-power position?" I asked. "It seems crazy to me to be sending, for example, 90,000 skilled workers to Australia, and no fewer to South Africa, and importing D.P.'s from Central Europe."

"The emigration to South Africa, Canada, and Australia, which is, admittedly, on a very large scale, can't be discouraged by the Government. Any such discouragement would involve relations with the Dominions Governments: at that level it is an international problem. The Dominions need the manpower no less than we."

"Yes," I said bitterly, "Canada is importing White Protestants as fast as she can into Quebec to try and meet the tide of French Catholic births! But why that should cause us to hand out skilled laborers and import what the Nazis failed to destroy, I can't see."

"We can't stop people emigrating," Elizabeth replied, "and, since most of them are going because they can't bear to live in a socialist society, I say, good riddance. Though," she added quickly, "we don't *want* anyone to go. In fact, we try and encourage every worker to stay, by raising wages, lowering hours, increasing family allowances, etc."

"If everything in this garden is so rosy," I queried "why have you got the literate so dead against you?"

"The Conservatives who voted Labor have gone home again," Elizabeth said. "We've left a lot of Liberals. But service in general is the answer. The middle classes are furious because there's virtually no service any more. And the servile attitude is gone. No more early morning tea."

"Ah, yes," I interrupted, "even on the boat people were grousing because the stewardesses would not bring it to them. And I was horrified to be brought it still at every country house where I stayed."

"You admitted you were visiting pockets of reaction, the hideouts of the White Russians. Of course, it *is* hard to lose service before you've gained gadgets. And I'm afraid we're a long way from a washing machine in every home. And from the complaisant charwoman who worked 12 hours for fifty cents all through my youth."

"What about the strikes?" I went on. "They hardly fit your picture of a proletariat paradise."

"I'm afraid the miners *are* being rather anti-social," Elizabeth agreed, "but that's not the result of anything that's happening now. It's long standing miseries and grievances coming out like boils. And the strikes today aren't half as bad as those that happened after the last war."

"There's no danger today of a general strike?"

"I should say, none whatever," Elizabeth said, "and, on the whole, I would say that industrial relations are remarkably good. I think the real bouncer for our critics is this: They've always

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

complained hitherto that Labor did not keep its election promises. Now they are complaining because it does."

"How far has nationalization been halted by the crisis? It has seemed to me that there has been more of a rumpus about that halting than has appeared in the papers."

"After all, the nationalization of iron and steel was part of our election pledge and we certainly must honor that promise as soon as we possibly can."

"The Conservatives have accepted nationalization in principle, have they not?" I asked.

"How far their acceptance is mere vote catching, I don't know, but certainly their line about almost every one of our measures now is, 'why didn't we do it two years ago?' "

"On the whole then, you would say that the present austerity is the will of the people?"

"Certainly," replied Elizabeth. "The moment a tiny corner of the curtain is lifted, the Government comes under a barrage of criticism—for lifting it. There are three letters to the Press asking why there are any luxury goods in the shop windows for one asking, why so few necessities are available."

"What about the black market? My niece, who can get all the gas she wants at only twice the legitimate price, tells me that on a three week tour of England and Scotland she had champagne every night and the eats that go with it, and a chauffeur told me his employers used 100 eggs a week. I myself have been offered all the clothing coupons I could possibly want at a mere 2/ (50 cents) each."

"The Black Market exists here, as elsewhere," admitted Elizabeth. "The difference is that in England it's not any one class that black markets now, but nasty people in every class."

"I suppose that not legislation but prosperity is the remedy? The people who sell clothing coupons are the poor with more children and coupons than cash. It's an evil that must cure itself."

"Yes," agreed Elizabeth, and, with an air of finality, she concluded, "by and large I think you could say with truth that in England today there is sorrow in every study, but no moaning at the bars, and the greyhound racers are slap-happy."

Theory of Prayer

Not in the streets, not in the white streets
Or in the crowded porticoes
Shall we catch You in our words,
Or lock You in the lenses of our cameras,
You Who escaped the subtle Aristotle,
Blinding us by Your evidence,
Your too clear evidence, Your everywhere.

Not in the groves, not in the flowering green groves
Where the pretty idols dwell
Shall we find the path to Your pavilion
Tented in cloud and fire:
We are only following the echo
Of our own lyres.

The wise man's blood
Freezes in every vein and artery
With the blue poison of his own indelible prudence.
And the lover,
Caught in the loop of his own lie
Strangles like a hare:
While the singers are suddenly killed,
Slain by the blades of their own song—
The words that clash like razors in the throat
Severing the tender strings.

For the things that we utter turn and betray us,
Writing the names of our sins on flesh and bone
In lights as hard as diamonds.
And the things we think have sold us to the enemy
Writing the names of our sins on the raw marrow
In lights as sharp as glass.
And our desires,
Uncovering their faces one by one
Are seen to be our murderers!
How did you break your jails, you black assassins?
How did you find us out, you numbered men?

Logic has ruined us,
Theorems have fired their folly at us,
Economy has left us full of swords
And all our blood is gone:
Oh, how like a death, now, is our prayer become!

We lie and wait upon the unknown Savior
Waking and waking in the guarded tomb 33. . . .

But the armed ocean of peace,
The full-armed ocean is suddenly within us.
Where, where, peace, did you get in?
And the armed ocean of quiet,
The full armed ocean, stands within us:
Where, from what wells, hid in the middle of our essence,
You silences, did you come pouring in?

But all our thoughts lie still, and in this shipwreck
We'll learn the theory of prayer:

"How many hate their own safe nothingness,
Their cell, their submarine?"

"How many hate Your Cross, Your key, the only one
To beat that last invincible door
That will surprise us, Peace, with Your invasion,
And let us in those soundless fathoms where You dwell!"

THOMAS MERTON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Stage & Screen

Man And Superman

MAURICE EVANS and Company are delivering the comedy portion of Shaw's "cerebral caper," an extraordinary production. The entire thing is delicious and should not be missed. Leaning as surely upon Shavian showmanship as his own (see the "Methuselah" preface), Mr. Evans has, except for the replacement of a few of its wittier lines, deleted the endless and provocative third act. This, set in a kind of saccharine hell, represents the chief protagonists in a Mozartian dream, and argues long and hard the philosophical theme of the whole: the "Life Force," that particular facet of Creative Evolution occupying the Master at the time. And one must admit, in respect of the aforementioned showmanship, the deletion is a just one. On the other hand, the process does seem to obscure the title a little. In spite of his mentioned "moral passion" it almost appears here that John Tanner is a Superman merely because of his ability to talk a little longer, and jump a little further, than anyone else. Which is a partial portrait, to say the least. On the other hand, I am not entirely certain that this quibble is a fair one, since the business is wholly concerned with marriage. And since the Shavian distaste for this institution had not yet been overcome in the year 1903, it stands to reason that his philosophical notions would be apt to be partial in any case: with all of his females (regardless of age, state, or inclination), mothers; all of his males, swaddled men. Somehow or other, I never can read this particular volume of the Shavian opera without a vision of the embattled Irishman, skipping through the purlieus of 19th century London, crying "No! No!" to all of the new (Ibsenian), as well as the true, women. And I'm quite sure this *is* a vision, rather than merely a notion. However, it doesn't constitute the present play, which is what we are supposed to be discussing. And moreover, in this year of grace, as he would be the first to deny, is it not necessary to report that Mr. Shaw has grown up?

The nation at large has not, since Miss Cornell's "Saint Joan"—where his Dauphin seemed to me a triumph of wit—had a chance to assess Mr. Evans in comedy. I think he is wonderfully good in this one: young, light, quick, and as impertinent as possible. Sometimes, the sheer *mouthsful* of speeches—pages of them—seem literally to force him into a pentameter rhythm, but I think this is probably a momentary excitement, and in any case, it seems to me only an actor long practiced in the rhetoric of Shakespeare could handle this particular Shaw. He has assembled a superlative company. Carmen Mathews's "Violet" and Chester Stratton's "Octavius" hold up the American acting end admirably; while Frances Rowe's "Ann" is such a controlled delight one is almost tempted to say that only the English can play the English perfectly. In fact, all are fine and, because of honest direction, engaged in witty business, as well as lines. I was not much struck by Frederick Stover's sets although they seemed to me faithful to the

EMIGRANT
INDUSTRIAL
SAVINGS BANK

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

★

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JOSEPH P. GRACE
Director, W. R. Grace & Co.
Trustee, Columbia University

ROBERT L. HOGUET
Attorney at Law, Amend & Amend
Trustee, The Children's Aid Society

ROBERT J. CUDDIHY
Director, Grace National Bank of N. Y.

WALTER H. BENNETT
Director of Bank of the Manhattan Company
Trustee, Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital

PATRICK E. CROWLEY
Former President, New York Central R. R.
Member, American Arbitration Association

BASIL HARRIS
Chairman, United States Lines
Member, Advisory Board, St. Vincent's Hospital

WILLIAM V. GRIFFIN
Chairman, Brady Security & Realty Corp.
Vice-President, N. Y. Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital

MICHAEL A. MORRISSEY
Chairman, The American News Company
Trustee, College of New Rochelle

ROBERT F. LOREE
Chairman, National Foreign Trade Council

THOMAS I. PARKINSON
President, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U. S.
Trustee, Columbia University

JAMES F. McDONNELL
Senior Partner, McDonnell & Co.

DANIEL P. HIGGINS
Partner, Eggers and Higgins, Architects
Director, New York Tuberculosis and Health Assn.

ROBERT W. DOWLING
President, City Investing Co.
Trustee, St. John's Guild

ARTHUR J. MORRIS
President, Fulton Trust Co. of N. Y.
Director, Catholic Youth Organization, N. Y.

JOSEPH F. ABBOTT
President, American Sugar Refining Co.
Trustee, The Nutrition Foundation, Inc.

JOSEPH P. CHAMBERLAIN
Professor of Public Law, Columbia University
Trustee, Russell Sage Foundation

THOMAS J. ROSS
Senior Partner, Ivy Lee and T. J. Ross
Trustee, United Hospital Fund of N. Y. C.

WILLIAM M. HOLMES
Director, Bonwit Teller, Inc.
Director, Better Business Bureau

JOHN T. MADDEN
President, Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank
Trustee, Iona College

MAIN OFFICE: 51 Chambers Street
BRANCH: 5 East 42nd Street
NEW YORK

This Mutual Savings Bank has 286,582 Depositors whose combined savings are $514,288,507.58 (As of October 1, 1947).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

author's groundplan. They are too cardboard to be real, and yet not gay enough to be comment. David Folkes's costumes: o.k.

In respect of Mr. Evans's announced intention to present the missing section for a number of special performances, naturally this column and, I hope, its readers will loudly concur. And I am wondering if it would not be possible somehow, in such a special event, to un-closet some of the preface, the stage directions, even a little of "The Revolutionist's Handbook," and deal them out on the stage, as introduction. Just the short author's directions for this dream-scheme hold clues and facts which should be heard as well as read. There must be a stage device buried in this possibility. To have *all of Shaw,* if only for a matinée or two, would be very good business indeed. Even the Great Big Showman himself, would concede that. I think Mr. Evans should consult him about this; he has earned the right to be firm. All that's needed is a playwright, and one might as well apply to the original one. (*at the Alvin*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Great Men Remind Us

IF YOU stop to consider what the movies could have done to the Schumanns (what with Robert's temperament, suicide attempt and growing insanity; and the gossip mongers' insistence that the relationship between Clara and Brahms was more than friendly) you will realize what a good job Producer-Director Clarence Brown has done in *"Song of Love."* I realize, however, that emphasizing the mistakes the film did not make is negative praise; and this is one musical biography that merits positive applause. The music itself is excellent with fine recordings of compositions which in most cases are not the obvious ones by Schumann, Brahms and Liszt. The script, credited in various degrees to six writers, is restrained but by no means dull as it tells the love story of Clara and Robert. Their devotion for each other grew stronger through the years in spite of obstacles: her father's opposition, their financial problems, his illness and her success in the concert field which was a source of frustration for him. The wife's love for her husband, continuing long after his death, provides the motivation for the inspiring last part of the film which shows Clara devoting herself to winning the public to the works of Robert Schumann.

Besides its handsome production, "Song of Love" excels in its two lead performances. Katharine Hepburn, who is no doubt prettier than Clara Schumann, gives a moving performance of imagination and depth as the loyal wife and concert pianist. One can really believe, as one watches Hepburn at the piano, that this woman was among the outstanding artists of her time. As the moody composer whose work has been called the voice of romance, as the loving husband and father, and also as a man suffering from a pressure on the brain, Paul Henreid does the finest acting of his career. Although I did not care for Robert Walker as Brahms, I do not think he is entirely to blame for this unconvincing performance. Perhaps Brahms himself could not have clarified this rôle. The supporting cast, which includes Henry Daniell as Liszt, Leo G. Carroll as Clara's father and many others, comes up to the high standards of this picture. While some liberties have been taken with incidents and chronology, "Song of Love" is a successful film biography that should please music lovers, movie enthusiasts and audiences just plain interested in a good film.

"The Unconquered" also presents us with various famous people, like Col. George Washington, Messrs. Mason and Dixon and a lot of courageous pioneers and fighters who pushed their way westward during this country's pre-Revolutionary days. I have no doubt that Producer-Director Cecil B. DeMille really meant to sing a movie of praise to our brave forefathers. But somehow he got so tangled in the story, about a bond slave from England (Paulette Goddard) and a Virginia militiaman (Gary Cooper) who saved her again and again from Indians (led by Boris Karloff as the chief of the Senecas) and from a villain (Howard DaSilva) who inspired the Indians on their war path, that his picture became a plethora of battles, chases, torture scenes and massacres. Mr. DeMille is a stickler for detail, so we have plenty of accurate costumes and sets, all brightened by technicolor, but too frequently you can hardly tell where you are as the location changes from fort to fort, from Indian camp to wilderness. And so many varieties of broken English are used by these 1763 Colonial settlers, by the soldiers from England, Scotland, and other foreign shores, by the Indians (who at one time even seemed to use the expression 'Ix-nay") that the script becomes difficult to follow. "The Unconquered" may be super-colossal as a production, but you better take a word from the Indians: Ix-nay.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Our Southern Great Plains

EDWARD S. SKILLIN

A FEW people hereabouts still remember the day in the spring of '34 when the sky turned a sickening yellow that blotted out the sun. It was neither an approaching cloudburst nor sudden intensification of the industrial murk that hangs over the city; the papers told us that it was topsoil blown in from the remote Southwest. That was the way that many of us first learned of Dust Bowls. Then we forgot about them. A few years later John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" made the "Okie," displaced victim of the dust storm, somewhat of a national type. And by the time the book had been made into a successful movie nearly everybody knew about him. Finally, it is rather hazily known that during and immediately after both world wars, because of food shortages and booming prices, vast tracts of America's Southern Great Plains were plowed up to produce prodigious quantities of the wheat badly needed overseas. That would about sum up what is generally known about the dust bowl area of the Southwest, which includes chunks of Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Texas and New Mexico.

It should be better known that the ups and downs of this extensive region have served as a background for some of the most colorful figures in the development of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the United States. Some of them provide the most lively pages of Vance Johnson's new book.*

One was an Iowan, W. P. Soash, who back in 1906, sent out agents through Illinois, Iowa and Ohio offering prosperous farmers and businessmen a free trip to Texas without obligation. The Plains there had had a decade of good moisture and were looking rather lush. Once he had bought up vast acreages, Soash made the most of the situation. His prospects left Iowa on a special all-sleeping-car train, with abundant food, fancy service, musical entertainment and solicitous attendance on the part of the land salesmen. The train would reach Texas the third morning out and the travelers could not restrain their enthusiasm as they piled into buckboards and buggies to drive out into the prairie. It was no coincidence that the way wound past a series of prosperous farms complete even to artificial lakes. The rest was easy. Soash was only one of the promoters of "the greatest tailor-made land boom this country has ever seen."

Even more spectacular was the activity five years later of C. W. Post of Battle Creek, the Postum, dry-cereal tycoon. Texas was one of his sources of supply and when bad reports continued to come in from his men in the Lone Star State he conceived the brilliant idea of intervening directly in the weather. If, as his delving into Cato and other historical works and his consultation with Civil War veterans indicated, "extraordinary rains pretty generally fall after great battles," why could he not reproduce battle conditions in so far as explosions were concerned? For rain was the one element needed to keep the Texas prairie productive year after year. Ironically a heavy rain fell just before the signal for the first mock battle. That postponed his dynamite bombardment for over a year. They tried twice and failed utterly, but in August, 1911 Post's men set off 1500 two-pound charges of dynamite one afternoon and that night there fell more than an inch of rain: Post directed that eight dynamite battles be scheduled, when needed, the following year, with increasingly heavy charges. That a score of them failed to produce the desired moisture would have been convincing to most men, but Post could always find an explanation in the time of day, the degree of humidity, the points from which the charges were launched, the strength and direction of the wind, etc. Before he died he managed to stage one more battle, "early in the morning because records indicated humidity normally was at its maximum at 5:00 a.m." (A shower developed in that general vicinity eight hours later.)

This Southwest Great Plains area is not the nation's only dust bowl, but it presents an extraordinary spectacle of either abundance or famine. A dozen years of comparatively adequate rainfall will be followed by several years of drought, with terrible plagues of grasshoppers striking suddenly ever so often. When lack of moisture and terrible winds occur simultaneously the havoc is almost inconceivable for vegetation, beast and man. And, of course, in certain years of good growing conditions there are surpluses which drag prices way below production costs.

One of the most pathetic things about the history of these plains is the unwillingness of its people to learn from past disasters. At the turn of the century there was such general confidence that there had been a "permanent

* Heaven's Tableland. Vance Johnson. Farrar. $3.00.

THEATRE GUILD PRODUCTIONS
A NEW MUSICAL PLAY
ALLEGRO
Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Book & Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2nd
Entire Production Staged by AGNES de MILLE
MAJESTIC THEA. 44th St. W. of Broadway. Evgs. 8:30 Matinees Thursday & Saturday, 2:30

THE MUSICAL HIT
OKLAHOMA!
Based on Lynn Riggs' "Green Grow the Lilacs"
Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Book & Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2nd
Directed by ROUBEN MAMOULIAN
Dances by AGNES de MILLE
ST. JAMES Thea. 44th Street West of Broadway. Evgs. 8:30 Matinees Thursday and Saturday 2:30

"TOPS IN TOON—SCOTCH AND SO-DA-LIGHTFUL."—Walter Winchell
CHERYL CRAWFORD presents A NEW MUSICAL
BRIGADOON
Book and Lyrics by ALAN JAY LERNER
Music by FREDERICK LOEWE
with
DAVID BROOKS • MARION BELL • PAMELA BRITTON
LEE SULLIVAN • GEORGE KEANE
WILLIAM HANSEN • JAMES MITCHELL
Dances by AGNES de MILLE • Staged by ROBERT LEWIS
Scenery by OLIVER SMITH • Costumes by DAVID FFOLKES
ZIEGFELD Thea. 6th Ave & 54th St, Evgs 8:30; Mats Thurs & Sat 2:30

"A very funny play, brilliantly written, acted and staged." —Robert Garland, Journal-American.
MAX GORDON Presents
BORN YESTERAY
The Hilarious Comedy Hit by GARSON KANIN
LYCEUM THEA. 45th St. E. of B'way. CH. 4-4256
Evenings 8:40. Matinees Wednesday and Saturday 2:40

BROCK PEMBERTON presents THE PULITZER PRIZE PLAY
FRANK FAY in
"HARVEY"
A New Comedy by MARY CHASE
with JOSEPHINE HULL
Directed by ANTOINETTE PERRY
48th St. Thea., E. of B'way. Eves. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40

INVITATION

THE CATHOLIC LITERARY GUILD cordially invites you to become a member of its rapidly growing family. There is, of course, no charge for this privilege. You will enjoy picking *your own selections* from our popular monthly lists. You will appreciate the money saved by Guild membership. This offer open to individuals, clubs, parish libraries, schools, etc.

Cordially Yours
Philip A. Costello
THE CATHOLIC LITERARY GUILD
18 Tremont St., Boston 8, Mass.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

change in the weather" that even supposed experts were carried away to the point of explaining to their optimistic compatriots just how this "change" had come about. Cassandras were apparently very few. Along with the blind confidence inspired by a few good growing years, on occasions there is also, as now, pressure for more and more production at bonanza prices to set at naught the only possible sound farming practices.

With the world increasingly hungry the cultivators of these plains have now thrown aside most of the recuperative measures painstakingly developed there by the Soil Conservation Service over the last ten years. When the next drought does come—as it will inevitably—the absentee owners who have varying amounts of Southwest acres in wheat will have merely a bearable loss on one of their several investments, but the people in the area will see their whole livelihood blowing away. And it will have devastating effects on other farming areas.

Mr. Johnson is a Texas newspaper man who has witnessed many of these things in the workaday course of duty. His account is unpretentious and straight. The impression I get is that there is some doubt whether this section of our country can ever become fully proof to drought, wind and grasshoppers. It has been demonstrated that much can be done to forestall these natural hazards. But it is certain that in the effort to make a killing the present southern Great Plains producers, both corporate and individual, by their present over-grazing, plowing up all cover, one-crop cultivation and other short-sighted methods will eventually reap the worst whirlwind yet.

On Tucking One's Shirt In

JOHN COURNOS

THE READING of more and more histories is to strengthen the conviction in at least one reader's mind that history is a great mistake. Hats off to the man who has said that happy is the nation that has no history. The energetic continent of Europe seems to have had more than its share of this dubious commodity. We who live in an age of wars, depressions, conflicting ideologies (accursed word symbolic of inhuman strife!), and peace conferences which at best but fill unhappy gaps between wars, are too conscious of history to hanker after it.

For the reader, as for the historian, however, it can be a game, at times a fascinating game—my move—his move—your move—check! A sterile, objectless performance, but exciting, perhaps, while it lasts. Then a new board, somewhat different moves, and, whoever wins, the result is virtually the same. Nothing is ever settled, except that the game has to go on, and someone has to win. Yesterday Napoleon, today Hitler, tomorrow some other chap with more violence in his nature than principle. The devil—hoping there is one for this specific purpose—take all these paranoiac conquerors with their lust for blood and power and myriads of corpses of innocents, victims of their domination!

It was Kipling who said that the Russian was a charming fellow until he tucked his shirt in. Since Peter the Great the world has watched the Slav tucking his shirt in, a performance which has brought him into the periphery of nations who have mastered the art aeons of time before him. In the process he has for a space removed the "iron curtain" which previously had shut him off. The poor fellow today must be tired of doing something alien to his nature, for we hear that the "iron curtain" is being brought back again into use.

However he may dress at United Nations conferences, at home, evidently, he must enjoy wearing his shirt outside his trousers; red shirt, to be sure, with the label, Engels & Marx, a Western importation, like the atom bomb and other toys he'd like to have. As for those red shirts, he'd be willing to furnish a supply to his small neighbors who, as like as not, wouldn't be given a chance to think twice about refusing it. A world with red shirts worn outside the trousers would assuage the troubled Slav soul, oh so nostalgic for peace, universal peace, achieved by uniformity of shirt and habit. It's such a nuisance having to tuck the shirt in. Much easier, if you're strong, to make the little fellow keep his out.

Easier—and such fun. Dostoevsky, a Russian, prophesied the type:

> I shall not be a bit surprised if in the midst of this Universal Reason that is to be there will appear, all of a sudden and unexpectedly, some common-faced, or rather cynical and sneering gentleman who with his arms akimbo will say to us: "Now then, you fellows, what about smashing all this Reason to bits, sending their logarithms to the devil, and living as we like according to our own silly will?"

In short, the man in revolt against a habit imposed on him by civilized Europe, the habit of tucking the shirt in. Very well, he will retort, call me names if you like. But I am civilized enough to use telegraphs and wireless and planes, and if you give me half a chance I'll use the atom bomb, too!

There is nothing contradictory in all this. It was a Russian, Herzen, living out his life in exile, who spoke nearly a century ago of "a barbarian with telegraphs"; it was another Russian, Berdyaev, who in more recent days, prophesied a new Dark Ages in which men will utilize planes; and not so long before World War II a French writer coined the phrase, "A guerilla in an aeroplane."

Evil communications corrupt good manners. And so it came to pass that Russia's cultured neighbors, the Prussians, half Slav in any case, borrowed a few ideas from Lenin & Co., learning from them the profound knowledge that you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. And a nice omelet these gentlemen, with their shirts outside their trousers, have made of Europe!

It is odd what the mind will do sometimes. I quite innocently began this essay with the intention of writing an orthodox review of a serious, and even excellent work of history: Andrei A. Lobanov-Rostovsky's "Russia and Europe 1789-1825" (Duke University Press. $5), which depicts a period of Russian history, brief as such things are, when the Russians did their best to conduct themselves like men accustomed to tucking their shirts in. And, by some curious association of ideas, it started my mind running on things, with rather devastating results as far as the review of the book is concerned. All the same, it may be regarded as a tribute to the book, that it should stimulate thoughts seemingly outside its province.

But there the fact remains: Russia did have a period

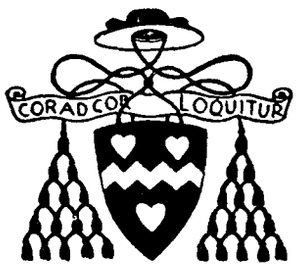
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now Ready — First Three Volumes

NEW EDITION OF THE WORKS OF

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Edited by Charles Frederick Harrold



Apologia Pro Vita Sua
A Grammar of Assent
The Idea of a University

- **Completely reset in clear modern type, uniform format**
- **Each volume with Introduction, Appendices, Index**
- **Bound in blue cloth, gold stamping, stained tops**

$3.50 each

The first of a set to include twenty volumes

Longmans, Green & Co. 55 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when she strove to be civilized and to commune with Europe on the basis of tucking the shirt in. It took a Karl Marx, borne along on the shoulders of Ghengis Khan—call him Sinbad the Sailor instead of the Tartar that Napoleon found in the Slav—to bring about a reversion to type.

Let us call the period Professor Lobanov-Rostovsky writes about an interlude of light between a Russia newly emergent from darkness and on the eve of drifting into a new darkness. Czar Alexander I, as the author reveals, was a relatively enlightened man, anxious for peace and amiable in conference. He was not so much susceptible to religion as to mysticism. He was to give way to Nicholas I, who, according to all authorities, was a despot, a consummate actor and a hypocrite. It is true that the great figures of Russian literature came into being and throve during Nicholas I's reign. We should perhaps say that they did so in spite of him; for the ground had been well prepared during the period covered by the Lobanov-Rostovsky's history, a well-considered narrative covering the military and diplomatic activities which involved Europe with Russia from the French Revolution to the ascension of Nicholas to the throne. These pages cover a period when Russia strove to be a European people, fully participating in the urge which, after Napoleon, led to the never realized dream of a federation of nations. There were big rascals in those days as in ours.

A perfectly fascinating chapter deals with Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, though the author does nothing to elucidate the mystery of who started the great Moscow fire which, in his opinion, helped to defeat Napoleon more than any other single factor. It was this fire, says the writer in no uncertain terms, "that definitely turned the tide of war against the French." He is inclined to side with Tolstoy's view, generally accepted today, that the fire was accidental: "a wooden city left empty without police or authorities was bound to burn." There are many sidelights on Russo-European history provided in this valuable history; but this only brings us back to the original thesis that history as such is something profoundly discouraging to those who would like to believe that humanity is going ahead. If it only weren't for those people who now and again revert to wearing the shirt outside their trousers. Kipling doubtless made the remark in jest.

More Books of the Week

A Treasury of Mexican Folkways. Frances Toor. Crown. $5.00.

TO KNOW Mexico intimately, it is not enough to walk along the boulevards of its cities or to follow the highways that now lead across the country down from the United States and from coast to coast. One must leave the automobile and mingle with the people, in the little side streets, the shrines, and the out-of-the-way villages. Needless to say, this process involves considerable time, loss of comfort, and risk of disease. The author of this volume, who has lived in Mexico over a period of years, has apparently not been deterred by any of these considerations. She has gone about her task with enthusiasm and determination and here presents the wealth of her findings—a veritable treasury of the customs, beliefs, and general culture of the Indians whom she describes as "still living in a folkloric state of civilization as compared to the modern."

After a short introduction which provides a satisfactory outline of the pre-Conquest peoples of Mexico, the book is divided into four parts, (1) detailing the arts, crafts, and religious beliefs of the Indians, (2) their family and group organizations and religious festivals, (3) music and dances, and (4) surviving ancient myths and legends. Ten color plates and one hundred drawings by Carlos Merida and one hundred and sixty-five photographs enrich the book immeasurably, so that the author advises the reader to look at the pictures before starting to read the book, which is itself almost encyclopedic.

To enter into the mentality of this aboriginal element of Mexico, which constitutes between thirty and forty percent of the population, as distinguished from the whites and the mixed groups, is an enormous and intriguing undertaking. Particularly in the realm of religious belief and practice, with primitive people, whose blending of heaven and earth is far more graphic than that of modern sophistication, one's observations may be fragmentary and easily led astray. Still more, in attempting to say where Catholicism and folklore religion begin and end, a writer's conclusions will be governed to a large extent by his or her basic principles and sympathies.

Frances Toor is not herself a Catholic, nor does her list of acknowledgments veer in that direction. Her general thesis, if the book can be said to have a thesis, is that the Catholic faith, among these ethnic groups, rests as a veneer upon a strongly surviving and highly picturesque paganism. Undoubtedly, a better understanding of the Catholic faith and a keener sense of what, for lack of a better expression, may be called the Catholic instinct, would have enabled the author to bring into greater relief the significance of Catholic culture and to assign to popular cults and expressions a truer appraisal relative to this faith. For her, although in a thoroughly kindly spirit, there seems to be no substantial difference between the pagan legends and what she refers to as "the Christian myths."

With this important observation, however, the book may be recommended as a most valuable compilation of Mexican folklore. It should be in the library of everyone who is genuinely interested in Mexico and its people.

JAMES A. MAGNER.

The Ring and the Cross. Robert Rylee. Knopf. $3.00.

ROBERT RYLEE has written a novel about high finance, politics, and the class struggle in coastal Texas during the boom period occasioned by World War II. The dominant character of this story is Adam Denbow, entrepreneur and politician, whose activities contributed largely to the building of a city, and who goes to the United States Senate. He represents power and privilege, as does the even more sinister oil millionaire, Wesley Clayton. Opposing them is Vaiden MacEachern, an idealist who dreams of freedom and opportunity for the individual.

In a sense this novel is a debate over the future order of society in the United States. Wesley Clayton makes the point that "the world has known two places of grace and security. One was the manor of medieval Europe, the other the plantation South of the 1850's. We have the chance to attain a state of equal grace. But with this difference: those two weren't founded on a stable material

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MAKE YOUR GIFT SELECTIONS NOW . . .

HEAVENLY FATHER OF CHILDREN. ***Francis Cardinal Spellman.*** **$1.50**
A moving prayer, by the Archbishop of New York, of faith and hope for man's resurrection from today's world of lusts and hatreds.

JESUS, SON OF MARY. ***Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen.*** **$2.00**
The life of Christ, written for children, in the familiar style of the famous radio lecturer; with four-color illustrations by Rafaello Busoni.

YOUNG EAGLES. ***Eva K. Betz.*** **$2.50**
Adventure for teen agers, reflecting the patriotism and idealism of the beginnings of the American Revolution, with excellent characterization and suspense.

FRANCE ALIVE. ***Claire Huchet Bishop.*** **$3.00**
A first-hand report on the effectiveness of Christianity in action: a renewal of the spirit which has deeply affected clergy, laity, workers and "capitalists."

RETURN TO POETRY: CRITICAL ESSAYS FROM SPIRIT. ***Edited by John Gilland Brunini, Francis X. Connolly, and Joseph G. E. Hopkins.*** **$3.50**
More than a score of papers by critics such as Raissa Maritain, Gouverneur Paulding, and Leonard Feeney, on the full meaning of poetry in our day.

THE SAVING SENSE. ***Walter Dwight, S. J. Intro. by W. Coleman Nevils, S. J.*** **$2.75**
Amusing essays on reading and writing, thinking and praying, blending seriousness with laughter, by the former literary editor of America.

THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA. **$2.50**
A report on the effectiveness of Catholic education for women, based on alumnae surveys; with an introduction by Dean Peik of the Univ. of Minnesota.

AFTER BLACK COFFEE. ***Robert I. Gannon*** **$2.25**
The bound record of timeless occasions: the most popular after-dinner speeches of one of America's most popular after-dinner orators.

WINDOWS WESTWARD: ROME, RUSSIA, REUNION. ***Stephen C. Gulovich.*** **$2.50**
Answering the question: What chance is there for reunion between the Orthodox Church and Rome, save through the medium of the Eastern Rite?

AS THE MORNING STAR. ***Marion A. Habig, O.F.M.*** **$2.75**
A reflective biography, centering on the last two years on earth of St. Francis of Assisi. With a discussion of his writings and the work of his Three Orders.

STOP KILLING DRAGONS. ***George L. Krock, M.M.*** **$2.00**
Delightful pen-pictures of the Chinese scene, from Confucius to chopsticks, fire-crackers to fairy tales, by a Maryknoller; illustrated by Mrs. Weda Yap.

SILVER FOUNTAINS. ***Dorothy Mackinder.*** **$2.00**
An unforgettable novel of the net of gossip and charitableness which ensnares four noble souls in a French village—which might be anywhere.

THOSE TERRIBLE TEENS. ***Vincent P. McCorry, S.J.*** **$2.25**
The answer to a maiden's prayer—or at least her questions; a happily written, but straight-from-the-shoulder discussion of adolescence, written for the Catholic high-school girl, and her directors.

THE WISDOM OF GOD. ***Fidelis Rice, C.P.*** **$1.75**
Forceful and quotable chapters on the major ills of our day: materialism, defeatism, skepticism; with reflections on the crucifixion as the true antidote.

TIM MURPHY, MORGAN RIFLEMAN, AND OTHER BALLADS. ***A. M. Sullivan***
Stirring narratives of an heroic American scout during the American Revolution, and other adventures of fact and fiction. With 32 illustrations by Howard Zoll.

CATHOLICISM. ***Gerald G. Walsh.*** **$1.25**
Two penetrating essays, and a reading list, intended for those who are intellectually curious about Catholic faith and tradition.

THE DECLAN X. McMULLEN COMPANY, Inc.
225 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 7, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New GRAIL PUBLICATIONS

THE SCHOOL OF LOVE
By Archbishop Goodier, S.J.
141 pages of spiritual essays on such themes as *Friendship, Cravings, Woman.* $1.50.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD
By Archbishop Goodier, S.J.
The whole picture of Christ is presented: His background, His surroundings, Himself. 143 pages. $1.25.

BROTHER TO BROTHER
By Henry Brenner, O.S.B.
How Charity as a supernatural virtue is dispensed through Church organizations and the Corporal Works of Mercy. 92 pages. $1.25.

CHRIST IN OUR BRETHREN, Part I, 75c
CHRIST IN OUR BRETHREN, Part II, 75c
By Raoul Plus, S.J.
How to attain union with Christ and through Christ union with our brethren. Paper covers.

CRUSADING ALONG SIOUX TRAILS
By Claudia Duratschek, O.S.B.
The perilous work of the Missionaries of the Sioux Indians in the conversion of this fierce Indian Tribe in the West. Illustrated with photographs. 350 pages. $4.00.

QUEEN OF MILITANTS
By Emil Neubert, S.M., S.T.D.
The theme is "To restore all things in Christ *through Mary.*" Learn what place Mary holds in the life of the Fighting Christ lived by His Mystical Body. A Catholic Action book. 144 pages. Paper bound. $1.25.

UNION WITH GOD
By Matthias Scheeben
This is Part II of *Glories of Divine Grace.* 154 pages. Paper cover. 30c.

Order from

THE GRAIL

Room Three **St. Meinrad, Indiana**

base. Today we have that base. We can make our state permanent." His means to this end, however, is a rigid authoritarian order imposed from above, such as might be achieved by freezing the politico-financial structure of which he is master. MacEachern, on the other hand, stands for a pluralistic society, free from the curse of nationalism, in which the individual will enjoy respect and have freedom of movement. "I want a unity derived from the tensions of opposites and nourished by conflicts, but one which recognizes that man's final loyalty is to no single nation."

In the end MacEachern is assassinated by the entrenched powers he has fought. To the question of why his kind is cut off while the Denbows and Claytons go marching on, the answer is given that humanity will rise to avenge its own. Although the novel provides a forum for these exciting ideas, it is weak in realization. An astonishing proportion—I should estimate nearly one-third—is generalized narrative. Perhaps this was thought necessary to introduce the extremely variegated populace present in a war manufacturing center. But generalized narrative, however indispensable at certain points in a novel, is not the kind of story-telling that makes us see things. There is too much synoptic presentation, and I fear that in description Mr. Rylee has not educated himself far past the cliché. Finally, because the characters tend to be embodiments of points of view rather than divided men, their struggles fail to touch us with poignance. The background is tense, but the reader who takes his delight in craftsmanship will not find much satisfaction here.

RICHARD M. WEAVER.

The Christian Churches of the East. Vol. I. Donald Attwater. $4.00.

WHEN OVER thirty years ago Mr. Andrew Shipman of New York City began to explain to American Catholics some of the mysteries concerning the Eastern Churches that were united with Rome it seemed something far off and remote from our own Catholic life in this country. Little by little our understanding of the Eastern Churches has improved and since the second World War the tragic importance of such understanding has increased with the persecution of our Eastern Catholics in Rumania, in Yugoslavia, in Russia itself, in Poland and the Baltic countries.

Mr. Attwater makes the modest claim of being no more than a popularizer and of simply using as his sources books readily accessible to all. Be that as it may, he is a most wonderfully gifted popularizer, for his familiarity with the subject has been gained over years of study and personal contact. These two volumes—the first on the United Churches of the East, the second which will be on the separated Churches—are the consummation of his devoted and intelligent labors. Volume I deals with the eight million Catholics of the Eastern rite who are in communion with Rome, explaining their history, liturgy and rites. This tiny minority of Catholic Easterners, says Mr. Attwater, "served providentially to preserve the material catholicity, the all-embracingness, the diversity-in-union of the Church of Christ. Up to the time of the schism there had never been any idea of uniformity in the Universal Church outside the necessary uniformity in faith and morals."

One of our great obstacles to the understanding of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Churches of the Eastern rites has been the variety of nomenclature, the perplexing fact that differences of rites do not coincide with differences of language or of nationality. Several rites, for instance, exist in the same Syrian nationality, the Melkhites, the Syrians, etc. Again, the Byzantine rite is celebrated in a variety of languages by any number of peoples. It is easy to use handy expressions which do not stand up under examination; such, for instance, as "Greek Catholic," "Catholic Orthodox"; yet a clarity and uniformity of nomenclature can be achieved. The Holy See has adopted the same, and it is to the great merit of Mr. Attwater that he has painstakingly worked out all the details and placed them in a simple way so that we may speak quite correctly of each of these different groups.

For a proper understanding of the Eastern Churches a few simple definitions or classifications are not enough. We need to know the geographic and demographic reality, the ordinary statistics of the Eastern Churches. The historical background is essential: how it is that they came into being, how it is that there should be so many differences sometimes within a small area, as particularly in the Near East. Again, differences of rite imply varieties of usage and peculiarities of Canon law and church discipline both as regards the clergy and the laity, prescriptions as to fasting, abstinence, celibacy, obligation of hearing Mass, etc. Finally (and none the least interesting and important) are the systems of spirituality, of holiness, of means of attaining holiness itself. The ideal of holiness is always the same, union with Our Lord Jesus Christ, the bearing of His cross, the following of Him in humility and charity, but the paths often diverge. As Mr. Attwater remarks:

> Oriental Catholics have retained far more than ourselves the notion of religious worship as a social and corporate act centered in the Holy Sacrifice, but they had no extra-liturgical *cultus* of the Blessed Sacrament until it was introduced from the West, and the degree of it varies from rite to rite and even within the same rite. Latins are naturally surprised, even shocked, by the apparent indifference sometimes shown by Orientals in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The surprise is not all on one side; their veneration is directed rather toward the whole sanctuary as the holy place of God, for the Host in the Tabernacle is very far away, "on the throne of the Lord, surrounded by all the holy ministers, by all the angels, and by all the saints." They sometimes remind us that the efficacy of the Eucharist as a sacrifice is bound up with the act of the Mass, and as a sacrament with the act of eating with faith. We excite devotion by displaying the Blessed Sacrament, theirs is aroused by its very hiddenness. Both attitudes are permissible, both true, both Catholic; and so with other divergences that we continually meet.

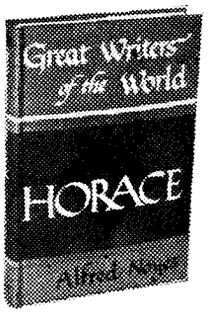
Very appropriately Mr. Attwater remarks:

> It is this inner life, this religious quality, of the Orientals that we of the West have to try to grasp and understand and learn from—for it is all part of that grand synthesis of divine truth and love and human needs and duties that is called the Catholic Christian faith. And in like manner the Orientals, whether Catholic or separated, can learn from the West.

Quite apart from the strictly religious issue it is important for anyone who wishes to understand the political situation today in the Near East to form a clear idea of what is the situation of the Ruthenian Catholics

It seems the reviewers like our new series

GREAT WRITERS of the WORLD



HORACE
by
Alfred Noyes
$3.50

"Under his affectionate, respectful, highly competent hand, time and space are swept away and we see at close range not only the poet but his Roman world . . . Quite apart from its excellent critical and personal evaluation of Horace, this is a memorable book. The prose is a poet's prose, illuminated by beautiful words, showing the labor of the file only in final smoothness. . . . Horace has, definitely, found his biographer."—*The New York Herald Tribune Book Review.*
"Enthusiastically recommended to the freemasonry of Horatians, and to all who seek initiation into it."—*The Saturday Review of Literature.*

BOCCACCIO
by
Francis MacManus
$3.50

"It is a kind of nostalgia that is evoked . . . by re-examining, in the company of Francis MacManus, one of the greatest of all Western writers. It is a pleasant nostalgia, because his book is utterly charming. It is a useful nostalgia, because his book is informative and instructive too. . . . It is a Catholic book, and that is fitting and proper . . . but above all it is a human book, a comprehending book."—*The New York Times Book Review.*

Order from your bookstore or from us

SHEED & WARD

63 Fifth Avenue **New York 3**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whereon to Stand

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI

With an introduction by

FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN

"The best exposition and representation of basic Faith and practice . . . WHEREON TO STAND breaks through the barrier of inarticulateness and establishes a good and reasonable and clear lane of communication between those outside the Catholic religion and those inside."—*Commonweal.* $3.00

Tale of the Twain

SAM CONSTANTINO, JR.

"Earnest, compact, directly written story of two men and a girl and of two nations and the peace of the world."—*Commonweal.* "An engrossing story well told."—*The Sign.* "You will want to read this thoughtful novel by a promising young Catholic writer."—JULIE KERNAN in *The Rosary.* $2.50

At your bookseller

HARPER & BROTHERS 49 E. 33rd St., N. Y. 16

You can't afford to miss this book!

homes

selected by the editors of Progressive Architecture

Here are 287 photographs and 116 drawings of the best new idea-packed homes in every part of the United States. HOMES gives you tips on planning, use of materials, details of design, built-in furniture, terraces, living-dining rooms, efficient kitchen and bathroom arrangements, and many other points. Houses range from very small to quite large. Some have one floor; some two.

$5.00

Reinhold Publishing Corporation

Dept. C-10, 330 West 42nd St., New York 18, N. Y.

of the different groups, Ukrainia, Hungary, etc., of the Rumanian Catholics, of the Russian Catholics, etc. These you will find explained with clarity. It must be always borne in mind that Latin Catholics may possibly be tolerated by Russia but Ukrainian Catholics of the Byzantine rite or Russian convert Catholics of the Byzantine rite are intolerable under the Soviets as they were under the Czars.

> It would be hopeless for the Russians to try and convert Poles to Russian Orthodoxy, but the Polish Ukrainians are another matter—they already share in the Slav-Byzantine culture. Obviously it is desirable from the Soviet point of view to detach as many people as possible from ultimate allegiance to a religious leader outside the U.S.S.R. —the Pope—and from membership in a closely knit supranational church. They see this as clearly as did the imperial Catharine II, Alexander I, and Nicholas I.

Special congratulations are due for the abundant and carefully selected illustrations with which the work is enriched.

Each year in New York City and in many other of our larger centers special liturgies are performed in the cathedrals or greater churches illustrating the various Eastern rites. Provision is sometimes made in our colleges and seminaries for the same. If when these events take place Western Catholics would provide themselves with Mr. Attwater's volume and study the history and details of the particular Eastern Catholic Church under consideration it will serve as a liberal education.

We cannot be content, however, merely satisfying intellectual curiosity. The members of the Eastern Catholic Churches are our brethren in Christ and our knowledge of the same must lead us to a deeper spiritual life, an intense prayer for their own stability under the difficulties of persecution and hardship of every kind and at the same time for the return of the much greater number of the Eastern Christians who are separated from Rome. The obscurity of Eastern Catholic Churches, we trust, is past and the day of their recognition and the realization of their vast importance in the Universal Church has dawned. In the words of the psalmist: "Let us arouse the down": *excitabo auroram!*

Knowledge should no longer be confined to scholars and a few specialists but should be in the hands and command of all. I hope that Mr. Attwater's work may be used universally.

JOHN LA FARGE.

Chatterton Square. E. H. Young. Harcourt. $3.50.

THIS is a Two Wives Tale; a leisurely but agreeable story of two families who live side by side on the outskirts of a town on the Bristol Channel. As judged by the conventional standards the "happy" marriage with a faithful, sober, prosperous husband is shown to be a failure. Mrs. Blackett had discovered during her honeymoon that she had married a conceited prig, and she found a poisonous solace in catering to his egoism. On the other hand, Rosamund Fraser had been deserted by her Fergus, who found his adolescent children five too many. Yet the Frasers as a family were gaily successful, and the wife, Rosamund, after two years had begun to take her desertion philosophically, and, on the whole, was glad to be relieved of the clashes between the redheaded

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tempers of her husband and sons. While their love lasted, she and Fergus had been completely happy, and, rich in her memories, Rosamund looked forward to brighter possibilities in the future.

What seems striking to me in this well-written story is the astounding monotony of lower middle-class British lives. The mild little festivities of our Jane Austen friends seem positively giddy compared to the doings of the Blacketts and Frasers. Mr. Blackett had taken his bride to Florence, and for nineteen years that remained her one long excursion. Neither Mrs. Blackett nor her three daughters had any friends, and when Mr. Blackett took his oldest girl to France, Mrs. Blackett, in a burst of independence, hired a car and saw the sights of the neighborhood for the first time.

Rosamund, although described as full of warm vitality, seems to have no interests outside her family circle, which includes a spinster friend as a p.g. She consoles herself for Fergus by falling in love with the only bachelor she encounters, a scarred veteran from World War I. Her eldest daughter marries a clerk she meets at work. But what girl of sixteen in the USA would be content like the younger Blackett and Fraser girls to pass their vacation gardening and cooking, and would be excitedly happy about having a picnic with another girl? Are we Americans abnormally gregarious and active or are the British so deep in a rut that they don't know it? I waited anxiously for one of the families to invite some friends in for tea, but it was the veteran who supplied drama by inviting them to his farm. Yet, strange to say, Miss Young handles her characters with such sure and sensitive insight that she arouses her readers' interest in them; it's a perfect book for a bed-table. But, after building up curiosity about Fergus, what he says to Rosamund on his nocturnal visit the author fails to divulge, and Miss Spanner, the p.g., is left baffled. Miss Spanner, scrawny, tart and Victorian, is one of the best creations.

E. V. R. WYATT.

The Moneyman. Thomas B. Costain. Doubleday. $3.00.

THE FABULOUS success of Costain's latest novel would be assured by one thing, if no other: the tremendous preoccupation of the American reading public with historical fiction, good or bad. Fortunately, once in a while, historical novels can be reasonably proud of one of their number, and it is reasonably certain to conclude that Costain's public will never have cause to abandon him. This story of Jacques Coeur, the moneyman to Charles VII of France, carries enough good narrative, good romance, good writing, and good color to make it a best-seller. It is to Costain's great credit that he enters a boudoir with decorum, that his historical detail moves one, without any difficulty, into another age, and that his moneyman ultimately emerges as a fellow to whom anyone would gladly entrust his exchequer. Always remembering Costain's *The Black Rose,* it is now hard to conceive of any historical subject with which he would not be at home. And being overwhelmed with such ghastly caricatures of both literature and history as we have been, it is worth noting that history, plus competence in narration, can still make the hours pass speedily, entertainingly, even stirringly. With all this, there is the added attraction of complete intellectual relaxation—there is no great demand on your brain.

T. E. CASSIDY.

"It was almost dark in Barndon Street, Soho, when the door of Number Five began to open, very very slowly . . ."

Thus begins the most unusual crime story in many years, a novel which the publishers—and the critics—think is destined to become a classic in its field.

Says HOWARD HAYCRAFT in *The Saturday Review of Literature:*

"This powerful, original, often disturbing first novel about an English murder trial will appeal alike to discriminating devotees of the whodunit (although this is no pattern puzzle) and to those readers who place human values above plot manipulation in their rare excursions into crime fiction."

Says WILL CUPPY in *The New York Herald Tribune Book Review:*

"A crime tale you won't forget."

Says ISAAC ANDERSON in *The New York Times Book Review:*

"This is a masterpiece."

Says GRAHAM GREENE:

"The best crime story I have read since *Malice Aforethought.*"

ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE

by Edgar Lustgarten

$2.50 *at your bookseller's*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A First

A CATHOLIC READER

edited by Charles A. Brady

This first *Catholic* Reader is a personalized anthology which offers fiction, biography, humor, essays and verse by Evelyn Waugh, Maurice Baring, Robert Lowell, F. J. Sheed, Ronald Knox, Clare Boothe Luce, Hilaire Belloc, Thomas Merton, C. C. Martindale, G. K. Chesterton, William Roper (his Life of Thomas More, complete) and many others. $3.50

October Selection of
The Catholic Book Club
The Thomas More Book Club

PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT TEARS

by Arthur Little, S.J.

A brilliant Irish philosopher (and poet) discusses the first problems of our time through the medium of Professor Plato, as engaging a teacher as you will ever meet. $2.00

October Selection of
The Thomas More Book Club

At your bookstore

DESMOND and STAPLETON
Seven Seneca Street Buffalo 3, N. Y.

Modern Christian Christmas Cards

Texts from the Liturgy
with designs in its spirit

Our new catalog is illustrated in full color and shows all our cards, which are carefully printed on excellent paper. We should be pleased to send you a copy if you would send thirty-five cents, which would be refunded on your first order.

Berliner & Lanigan
Nevada City, California

It Was Mary. Eleanor Arnett Nash. Appleton. $2.75.

MARY it was who, if not Rose, gravitated then from being the daughter of a man who did odd jobs when he worked at all and a woman who took in washing to becoming *the* Mrs. Glidden of New York society. She doesn't do it overnight, of course; the century turns, and the first decade of the new one leads to automobiles, the breakdown of social forms, and war. Mary remains Mary through it all; disarmingly, she is described as trite and a bit dull, but possessing character and pride. She takes—as who does not?—a lifetime to make with her whole being the adjustment the logic of her situation demands.

Because "It Was Mary" involves many deft virtues and yet remains a light novel, it is instructive to ask why. Light fiction at its best is capable of real perceptiveness and the nuances, but its frame remains artificial and trivial. Mrs. Nash does not at all remove the larger problems of her story from the easy carpentry of the slick magazines. She presents almost inattentively a whacking major, then turns astute and loving application to her minor. The impact of Mary's Catholicism on the Gliddens, for example, is treated with sympathetic awareness. The author's best effects come from her omniscient view and delicate delineation of her characters' misreadings of one another and the consequent false conclusions and reactions in which they indulge themselves. But the structure of life is not in it, and the ponderous syllogism remains gigantically unmoving.

RILEY HUGHES.

Madame Elisabeth of France. Yvonne de la Vergne. Translated by Cornelia C. Craigie. Herder. $4.00.

THIS BOOK is a eulogy of Princess Elisabeth, the unmarried sister of King Louis XVI, whom the French revolutionists guillotined in 1794, fifteen months after her royal brother died on the scaffold and six months after his wife's, Queen Marie Antoinette, execution. The author did not intend to write another story of the French Revolution or to explain how the strongest monarchical power in Europe was crushed to death in the torrent-like mass upheaval; as she mentions in the preface, she wanted to make possible "a more widespread acquaintance with the pure and beautiful life of Madame Elisabeth." She also informs the reader that she drew the picture of the French princess from the book "Une grande chrétienne; Madame Elisabeth de France (1765-1794)," written by Sister Marie Aimée of the Sacred Heart, who asked Pope Pius XI, in 1929, for the introduction of the cause of beatification of Princess Elisabeth.

Yvonne de la Vergne's picture being a deeply religious one, it cannot be regarded solely from the historical point of view. She tells the story of a pious princess brought up in the principles of the *ancien régime,* who often thought of becoming a nun, but who decided to stand by her weak, well-meaning brother during the long years of vaccillation, incompetence, and suffering. The most vivid part of the book is the description of the flight of the royal family to Varennes (June, 1791), which sealed the doom of Louis XVI; the most terrifying part shows the little Dauphin, a boy of eight, bestialized by his official tutor, the shoemaker Simon: taught blasphemies, intoxicated with brandy, and eventually induced to accuse his mother, Marie Antoinette, of immorality. And throughout the final chapters the so familiar pattern of people's courts,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state trials, false witnesses, spies, and informers, of torture and humiliation, becomes visible—a pattern which, one and a half centuries later, has been developed to such a propagandistic perfection in totalitarian countries.

The translation of the French text is excellent.

JOHN M. GOSTA.

Ferdinand Lasalle: Romantic Revolutionary. David Footman. Yale. $3.50.

KARL MARX put up with him. Engels loathed him. Bismarck used him. Women were completely charmed by him, while he himself, apart from his strange but lucrative loyalty to the much older Countess Hatzfeld, was perhaps the most callous "wolf" of his days. At the height of his career, just when he had achieved what neither Marx's and Engels's Communist Manifesto nor Schulze-Delitzsch's efforts did, namely the fermentation of Germany's workers into an aggressive, conscious and independent class, he died in a foolish but valiant duel over a worthless girl in Geneva. He had all the makings of a charlatan: a born *Hasal,* he raised his social standards by Gallicizing his name from its Breslau ghetto flavor into Parisian elegance. He ruthlessly plagiarized Marx. He pushed his way into society. He was tactless and loud, but brilliant. He was simon-pure of any religious emotion or thought and his scant ethics were built around his ego and a certain noblesse to help his social standing and the naive stirrings of his fundamentally decent heart. He stuck to Countess Hatzfeld and helped her win a fortune from her worthless husband, blackmail fashion. Then he lived for the rest of her life with the tastes of an upper class gentleman on his share from her fortune, paid in annual rents. He lived for the idea of revolution and liberation of the underdog, dabbling in literature and philosophy, organizing and agitating, throwing champagne and caviar parties for his bohemian and noble friends. Himself a Jew, he was a pitiless critic of the foibles of his Jewish contemporaries. A champion of the common man, he had all the makings of a machiavellian dictator and militarist.

Mr. Footman has done an excellent job of digesting, organizing and high-lighting Lasalle's life for us who have had such a variety of demagogues and true statesmen: Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, on one side; Churchill, Roosevelt, De Valera, on the other. His book is sober, good history and yet, in its sobriety, in its clever choice of concise quotations, in its objective and revealing method of judging his hero out of his own mouth, it is such a fascinating, implicit analysis of the Don Juan-Machiavelli of the German labor movement that its reading is pleasantly engaging, while amusing and earnestly instructive. I hope he will write a Karl Marx for us.

H. A. REINHOLD.

A Multitude of Living Things. Lorus J. Milne and Margery J. Milne. Illustrated with photographs. Dodd. $4.00.

THE DRS. MILNE, a man-and-wife team of young biological scientists, have brought to the preparation of this book three admirable gifts. They write with easy informality, translating their immense technical information about twenty chapterfuls of various kinds of living creatures into comfortably conversational prose. They know the charm and value of concentrating intensively on the life of one small area: telling in detail all about

"Reading WHEN THE MOUNTAIN FELL, you are more confident of the worth and endurance of the human soul."

—Dorothy Canfield

When the Mountain Fell

A novel by C.-F. RAMUZ. The story of a man returned to life. "One of the summits of French prose."—*Paul Claudel.* Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. A Catholic Book Club Selection. $2.50

Pilgrim of the Absolute

By LEON BLOY. "The Pantheon Press has put the English-speaking Catholic world in its debt. We have need of Bloy's violence and passion and poetry."—*Cathedral Book Club.* $3.50

The Face of the Saints

By WILHELM SCHAMONI. "It would be impossible to overpraise this product of a publishing house already distinguished for books of spiritual tone." — *Cardinal Hayes Literature Committee.* $4.50

Joy

By GEORGES BERNANOS. "This, his third great novel of the troubled journey of the Christian soul, has the impact of great literature."—RILEY HUGHES, in *Columbia.* $3.00

At all bookstores

Pantheon Books, Inc.

40 Washington Sq., N. Y. 12

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Good Reading

This current issue of The Commonweal is one of the four (Spring, Fall, Children's, Christmas) special literary issues of the magazine each year. Yet in several senses every number of The Commonweal is a literary number.

Books are a prime interest of Commonweal editors and contributors, as sources of pertinent ideas, reflections of various ways of life, reactions to political and social situations. The magazine deals with books in articles, occasional editorials, reviews of varying dimensions and an occasional Inner Forum.

Then there is the literary quality of the magazine itself. Feature articles with a certain style, a warmly human approach, a decidedly personal flavor. Poems accepted and published in The Commonweal are not many, but the few selected reflect special interest and distinction. Editorials and reviews make certain points.

These are a few reasons why The Commonweal has so many devotees who are interested in good reading. If you are interested in good reading, utilize the attached coupon to secure the next twelve issues of The Commonweal.

-----12 Issues for $1-----

For New Subscribers

THE COMMONWEAL,
386 Fourth Ave.
New York 16, N. Y.

For the enclosed $1 send me the next 12 issues of
THE COMMONWEAL

Name .....

Street .....

City .....
10/24/47

what a biologist can find by overturning one stone in the woods, or what he can discover by watching intently the happenings on one small bush. Not least importantly, they take fine photographs; and their book has more than a score of them.

There are all sorts of "naturalists," which is a kind of catch-all term for all considerers of outdoors. There are naturalists who are philosophers, naturalists who are poets, and naturalists who co-examine nature and supernature and write as theologians. The Milnes are biological naturalists. Their factuality is enormous, their meditations unrecorded. They write a good direct prose, greatly informative, not memorable. This is an excellent book for readers who want a sound volume of information about the wonders of the countryside, simply and straightforwardly presented. Though written for adults, it should also have appeal and usefulness for biology-minded young people. There is a stimulating appendix of bibliographical references, and an efficient index.

ALAN DEVOE.

Russia: The Giant That Came Last. Joshua Kunitz. Dodd. $5.00.

THE IMPORTANT point to make for any prospective purchaser or borrower of this readable new book is that it ends in 1917—it is entirely background rather than contemporaneous material. Once that is said with the further remark that it does not constitute a source for political polemic, I can turn to its good points. A diner out will find enough about Peter the Great and Catherine the Great to inject them into the conversation when the pause is opportune. A student of literature will find all the big Russian names mentioned, while the social theorist can enjoy good talk about the ideas of Herzen, Belinsky, Bakunin, Plekhanov—and above all, Lenin. Much of the book is devoted to the details of how Lenin came to power and the various autocratic, democratic and other obstacles he brushed aside on his way up. It is all developed in good popular style. Mr. Kunitz's book ends with the feeling that after centuries of serfdom, ignorance, oppression and unparalleled wretchedness the milennium had come.

E. S.

CONTRIBUTORS

Max ASCOLI is a professor at the New School for Social Research and author of "Intelligence in Politics." He has just returned from a European journey.
Vivian MERCIER is a professor at Bennington College in Vermont.
Anne FREMANTLE, an associate editor of THE COMMONWEAL, has recently returned from a summer spent in England and France.
Thomas MERTON, author of "Man in the Divided Sea," is a Cistercian monk of the Strict Observance (Trappist) of Gethsemani, Kentucky.
John COURNOS is a native of Kiev, Russia, the author of a number of novels and a compiler of translations from the Russian.
Rev. James A. MAGNER is Procurator of the Catholic University of America and conducts a seminar in Mexico each summer.
Richard M. WEAVER is in the English Department at the University of Chicago.
Rev. John LA FARGE, S.J., is editor of the magazine *America*.
E. V. R. WYATT is drama critic of the *Catholic World*.
T E. CASSIDY teaches English at the University of Notre Dame.
Riley HUGHES surveys books for *Columbia* and teaches in the Foreign Service School at Georgetown University.
John M. GOSTA is a new reviewer for THE COMMONWEAL.
Rev. H. A. REINHOLD, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Sunnyside, Wash., is compiler and editor of "The Soul Afire" and a leader of the liturgical movement in the United States.
Alan DEVOE is author of "Phudd Hill" and other books of nature including the forthcoming "Speaking of Animals."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED